HODEGETRIA AND VENETIA VIRGO:
GIOVANNI BELLINI'S SAN GIOBBE ALTARPIECE

by

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B.A., The University of British Columbia, 1977

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
(The Department of Fine Arts)

We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
October 1979
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This study focuses on a single work, Giovanni Bellini's altarpiece of the Virgin and Child enthroned with saints, painted about 1485 for the altar of Job in the church of San Giobbe, Venice (now in the Accademia); its purpose is to make more apparent Bellini's inventiveness and the depth of his response to Venetian ideology and thus to lead to a fuller understanding of his importance to later painters not only in technique and style but in iconographical motifs.

The painting has always been recognized as a key work in Bellini's oeuvre, in the history of Venetian painting and in the development of an important altarpiece type, the monumental sacra conversazione. Critical analysis of it, however, has been mainly stylistic and it has received only limited interpretation of its religious iconography and no study of its iconological aspect as a uniquely Venetian work. The San Giobbe altarpiece is a major Venetian work of art which can profitably be considered in a broader context of religious and social function. This inquiry requires identification of the unique Venetian quality and characteristics of the San Giobbe altarpiece and the recreation as far possible of its site, the context of its commission, its devotional function and an interpretation of the possible ideological content of the work which would account for its considerable contemporary fame and widespread influence.

In Chapter Two detailed observation reveals the rich and complex iconography; a re-examination of the formal elements and the total architectural and spatial composition permits a reconstruction of the
viewer/worshipper's experience of the altarpiece in situ. Chapters Three and Four consider previous discussions of the Italian sacra conversazione tradition in order to establish a framework for identifying the basic theme and features of the type of sacra conversazione altarpiece which became popular in late fifteenth century Venice. Local Venetian traditions will be considered to establish the Venetian origin and character of the type. Chapter Five will outline the history of the foundation, major building phases and nature of patronage of the church of San Giobbe, as well as the site, commission and devotional function of the altarpiece. Chapter Six considers the ideological content of the altarpiece which meshes with its traditional religious function. The iconography and meaning of the altarpiece will receive a tentative interpretation in the light of the Venetian propensity to use religious images to symbolize ideas of state and to determine the "national" symbolism which this altarpiece, and possibly this type of altarpiece, might have. This political use of art in Venice is related to the national cult of the Evangelist Mark and the association of the state with the saint in a glorious destiny which provided religious justification and expression of the aspirations of the state.

The character of the Venetian sacra conversazione type centres around the elevated, "public" enthronement of the Virgin heralded by music-making angels housed in a distinctive spatial construction illusionistically and physically contiguous with the viewer's space. There are strong indications that Giovanni Bellini is the inventor of this type of sacra conversazione, of which his San Giobbe altarpiece is the prototypical statement. It satisfies the requirements of the sacra conversazione theme
of intercession and personal salvation in its dual effect of the Virgin's simultaneous distance and proximity to the saints and the viewer and in its Eucharistic iconography. Inquiry into the church and patronage contexts suggests that the altarpiece, frame, altar and probable tombslab of the donor of Bellini's painting, formed a funerary ensemble equivalent to a burial chapel. Finally, this study suggests that within the religious theme and function of the altarpiece there are expressions of ideas about the Venetian state as unique, perfect, enduring and filled with virtue that are popularly known as the "Myth of Venice": that ongoing process of political self-definition and state propagandization in which the visual arts traditionally played a key role. The remarkable integration of two artistic traditions in the San Giobbe altarpiece, the Byzantine and the Roman, reflects the two traditions which were drawn upon in the period of renewed state propagandization contemporary to the San Giobbe altarpiece. The religious motifs of the enthroned Virgin and the music-making angels symbolize ideas about the sacred and harmonious nature of the Venetian Republic and its divine mission to propagate peace and to dispense justice. Bellini's San Giobbe altarpiece is further evidence that the visual arts in Venice played, as they had in the past, an important role in the orchestration of the ecclesiastical and political self-awareness of the ruling members of the state.
TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS .................................................. vii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ......................................................... x
ABBREVIATIONS OF JOURNALS ............................................ xi
CHAPTER ONE. INTRODUCTION ............................................. 1
CHAPTER TWO. DESCRIPTION OF THE ALTARPICE ...................... 14
CHAPTER THREE. A FRAMEWORK FOR A CONSIDERATION OF THE VENETIAN SACRA CONVERSAZIONE ALTARPICE .................. 42
CHAPTER FOUR. THE SACRA CONVERSAZIONE ALTARPICE IN LATE FIFTEENTH CENTURY VENICE ............................. 58
CHAPTER FIVE. HISTORY OF THE SITE, AND DEVOTIONAL FUNCTION OF THE ALTARPICE ........................................ 71
   Phase One
   Phase Two
   Phase Three

CHAPTER SIX. THE DUAL HERITAGE OF ROME AND BYZANTIUM IN THE RELIGIOUS ICONOGRAPHY OF THE VENETIAN STATE ........... 106
   The Roman Tradition in Fifteenth Century Venice
   The Byzantine Tradition in Fifteenth Century Venice
   Strengthened Political Expression in Late Fifteenth Century Venice
   Two Artistic Traditions in the San Giobbe Altarpiece
   State Iconography in the San Giobbe Altarpiece
   The Virgin as an Emblem of Venice
   The Angels as an Emblem of the Venetian Constitution
   Conclusion

ILLUSTRATIONS ............................................................... 130
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY .................................................. 177
APPENDIX I. HISTORY OF THE LITERATURE AND DISCUSSION OF THE DATING ......................................................... 181
APPENDIX II. A DOCUMENTED HISTORY OF THE CHURCH .............. 196
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

2. Interior of San Giobbe (photo: P. Paoletti, L'architettura e la scultura del Rinascimento in Venezia, pl. 42)
3. Altar of Job, church of San Giobbe (photo: Ralph Lieberman)
5. Coat of arms on altar of Job, detail of Bellini's altarpiece frame, San Giobbe.
6. Giovanni Bellini, Virgin Enthroned with Saints, Venice, Accademia, c. 1485 (photo: Böhm)
7. Photomontage of Bellini's altarpiece in original frame (G. Robertson, Giovanni Bellini, pl. LXVII)
8. Bellini, Virgin and Christ, detail of San Giobbe altarpiece (photo: Böhm)
9. Diagram Plan of Altar and Altarpiece, Giovanni Bellini, San Giobbe (not to scale)
10. Cherub below Christ in Glory, central vault, Baptistery, San Marco, Venice, c. 1350 (photo: R. Pallucchini, La Pittura Veneziana del Trecento, fig. 248)
11. Bellini, Angels, detail of San Giobbe altarpiece (photo: Böhm)
12. Paolo Veneziano, Coronation of the Virgin, Venice, Accademia, c. 1350 (photo: Pallucchini, Trecento, fig. 144)
13. Pietro Lombardo, portal of San Giobbe, 1470's (photo: Paoletti, Rinascimento, pl. 40)
14. P. Lombardo, Francis and Job, detail of San Giobbe portal (photo: Böhm)
15. Giovanni Bellini, Dominic, Sebastian, Louis of Toulouse, detail of San Giobbe altarpiece (photo: Correr 6465)
16. Border of Bishop's Cope, detail of Bellini's San Giobbe altarpiece (photo: Correr 6465)
17. Frame of Bellini's lost altarpiece, SS. Giovanni e Paolo, Venice, early 1470's (photo: Paoletti, Rinascimento, pl. 108)
18. Giorgione, Virgin Enthroned with Saints, Castelfranco, c. 1505 (photo: Terisio Pignatti, Giorgione, pl. 14)
19. Pietro Lorenzetti, Virgin with Baptist and Francis, San Francesco, Assisi, Lower Church, Chapel of Napoleone Orsini, c. 1320 (photo: L. Coletti, Gli Affreschi della Basilica di Assisi, pl. 165)


23. Domenico Veneziano, Virgin Enthroned with Saints, Florence, Uffizi, mid 1440's, from S. Maria dei Magnoli, Florence (photo: Encyclopedia of World Art, s.v. "Domenico Veneziano," pl. 233)


26. Andrea Mantegna, Virgin Enthroned with Saints, Verona, San Zeno, 1456-1459, high altar (photo: G. Paccagnini, Andrea Mantegna, Catalogo della Mostra, pl. 11)

27. Piero della Francesca, Virgin with Angels, Saints and Donor Milan, Brera, 1472-1474, from San Bernardino in Urbino (photo: EWA, s.v. "Piero della Francesca," pl. 166)

28. Marcello Fogolino, Virgin Enthroned with Saints, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, c. 1510 (photo: Berenson, Study and Criticism of Italian Art, Series III, 1916, pl. opp. p. 113)


30. Reconstruction of Antonello's San Cassiano altarpiece (Wilde, "Die Pala di San Cassiano," fig. 66)


33. Photomontage of Bellini's lost altarpiece (Zanotto engraving) with original frame in SS. Giovanni e Paolo, Venice (Robertson, Bellini, pl. XXXIX)

34. Giovanni Bellini, Virgin Enthroned with Saints, formerly SS. Giovanni e Paolo, Venice, 1470-1475, watercolour copy (photo: R. Fry, Giovanni Bellini, 1900)


36. Cima da Conegliano, Virgin Enthroned with Saints, Conegliano, Duomo, 1493 (photo: L. Coletti, Cima da Conegliano, pl. VII)
37. Photomontage of Bellini's San Giobbe altarpiece in original frame (Hubala, Madonna Mit Kind, 1969, fig. 11)
38. Masaccio, Trinity, Florence, S. Maria Novella, c. 1425 (photo: L. Berti, Masaccio, pl. 6)
40. Giovanni Bellini, Virgin Enthroned with Saints, Venice, San Zaccaria, 1505 (photo: Robertson, Bellini, pl. XCVIII)
41. Desiderio da Settignano, Sacrament Tabernacle, Florence, S. Lorenzo, 1461 (photo: Pope-Hennessy, Italian Renaissance Sculpture, fig. 45)
42. Romanino, Virgin Enthroned with Saints, Padua, Museo Civico, 1513 (photo: L. Grossato, Il Museo Civico di Padua, Venice, 1957, fig. 165)
43. Alvise Vivarini, Virgin Enthroned with Saints, formerly Berlin, Kaiser Friedrich Museu, 1493, from S. Maria dei Battuti, Belluno (photo: Pallucchini, Vivarini, fig. 259)
44. Marco Marziale, Circumcision, London, National Gallery, 1500 (photo: Davies, Earlier Italian Schools, vol. 2, pl. 275)
47. Cima da Conegliano, Virgin Enthroned with Saints, Venice, Accademia (Pala Dragan) (photo: Coletti, Cima, no. 42)
48. Cima da Conegliano, Virgin Enthroned with Saints, Berlin, Staattliche Museen, end of 15th.c, from S. Michele di Murano (photo: Coletti, Cima, no. 39)
50. Cima da Conegliano, Virgin Enthroned with Saints and Donors, Parma, Galleria Nazionale, c. 1507 (photo: Coletti, Cima, no. 114)
51. Lorenzo Costa, Virgin Enthroned with Saints, Bologna, S. Petronio, 1492 (photo: Venturi, North Italian Painting, Part I, pl. 73)
52. Giovanni Buonconsiglio, Virgin Enthroned with Saints, Vicenza, Museo Civico, from Oratorio dei Turchini (photo: Heinemann, Bellini e i belliniani, vol. 2, fig. 801)
53. Giovanni Bellini, Mark Presenting Agostino Barbaro to the Virgin, Murano, S. Pietro Martire, 1488 (photo: Heinemann, Bellini, vol. 2, fig. 68)
54. Giovanni Bellini (with assistants) Donor Presented by John the Baptist to the Virgin, Venice, S. Francesco della Vigna, 1507 (photo: Heinemann, Bellini, vol. 2, fig. 105)
55. Andrea Rico, Virgin of the Passion, Parma, Galleria Nazionale, mid 15th c (photo: Galleria Nazionale, Parma)

56. Cima da Conegliano, Madonna, Florence, Uffizi (photo: Coletti, Cima, no. 88)

57. Giovanni Bellini, Virgin and Christ, detail of San Giobbe altarpiece (photo: Böhm)

58. Annunciate, Aquileia, Basilica, mid 14th c (photo: W. Wolters La scultura veneziana gotica, 1976, vol. 2, fig. 59)


60. Vincenzo Catena, Mark Presenting Leonardo Loredan to the Virgin, Venice, Correr, c. 1500 (photo: Robertson, Vincenzo Catena, 1954, no. 7)


63. Detail of foliate crosses from bronze doors of central atrium of San Marco, Venice, c. 1112 (photo: Fraser, "Church Doors," 1973, fig. 11)

64. Giovanni Bellini, Virgin Enthroned with Saints (photo: Böhm)


66. Jacobello del Fiore, Allegory of Justice, Venice, Accademia, 1421, formerly Ducal Palace (photo: Moschini-Marconi, Accademia, no. 31)


68. Follower of Titian, Virgin with Sebastian and Roch, Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, early 16th c (photo: D.F. von Hadeln, Venezianische Zeichnungen der Hochrennaissance, pl. 35)

69. Giovanni Bellini, Virgin and Christ, detail of San Giobbe altarpiece (photo: Böhm)
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Debra Pincus for her expert guidance, clear insight and unfailing sense of humour, and for her generous offering of ideas, valuable references, material and photographs.

I am indebted to my mother, Mrs. Erma Richardson, for her encouragement and work on the typescript.

Finally, my heartfelt thanks to Hamish Mackenzie for his constant support and optimism.
ABBREVIATIONS OF JOURNALS

Art Bulletin:  AB
Art Journal:  AJ
Art Quarterly:  AQ
Burlington Magazine:  BM
Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes:  JWCI
Renaissance Quarterly:  RQ
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Prima se vede in bela maestà
La Madre col Bambin: forma si dota
No fu mai vista, o idea così devota;
Se puol ben dir: L'e una divinità!

Marco Boschini, 1660

Dalla parte verso Piazza si vede Venetia Vergine, la quale con la sua incorrotta purità, si difende dall'insolenza altrui, & s'appoggia al mondo, perch'ella sola fra tutte l'altre è restata incorrotta, & intatta da gli altrui barbari, & tirannici Imperij.

Francesco Sansovino, 1581

Marco Boschini wrote his panegyric in praise of the impressive Madonna of the sacra conversazione which Giovanni Bellini painted in about 1485 for the altar of San Giobbe, in the monastic church dedicated to that saint in Venice. The Madonna and Christ Child enthroned with saints and music-making angels beneath the golden Byzantine apse mosaic of a Renaissance chapel exemplifies a new type of monumental Venetian altarpiece which became very popular in the latter half of the fifteenth century in Venice and the Veneto. From the time of its execution the painting has been praised as one of the high achievements of Venetian Renaissance painting, and seems to distil a uniquely Venetian spirit which has been variously described in pious, poetic, or stylistic terms. The integration of the spatial composition with the frame, the high and
narrow format, the combination of Renaissance architectural and decorative motifs with the Byzantine mosaic of the apse vault, the glowing atmosphere of sunlight receding into warm shadow, the exquisite harmony of the music-making angels, are distinctively Venetian. Above all, the Madonna, depicted simultaneously as the imperious Hodegetria, massive in her dark drapery, and as the Mother of Mercy, modest and inviting in mien, supporting the Christ Child with her right hand as she raises her left in an unusual and expressive gesture, is the focus of the painting, indeed a "divinità," the object of great and ancient devotion in Venice. The Virgin Mary figured so largely in the collective theological/political imagination of Venice that the personification of Venice, "Venetia Vergine" assumed many of her graces, attributes and qualities. Francesco Sansovino, in his guide to his native Venice written in 1581, records the traditional metaphor used to glorify the never-conquered Venetian Republic: the "incorrotta purità" of the Virgin Mary.

The altarpiece is undated and no documentation survives. Appendix I contains a more detailed discussion of the literature, position of the work in Bellini's oeuvre, and dating. Two notices by Marcantonio Sabellico and Marin Sanudo of about 1493 are evidence of the completion of the altarpiece by that date, and record its early reputation as one of the outstanding works of Venetian art. Both notices appear in works whose theme is the praise and glorification of Venice.

Sabellico's notice appears in his guide to Venice, De Venetae urbis situ, Venice, 1493:

Visitur in parte aedis Joaniis Bellini tabula insignis quam ille inter prima artis suae rudimenta in apertum retulit.

Whether his brief notice is interpreted as praise of Bellini's newly
mastered oil technique, or uncritical repetition of popular belief in
implying an erroneously early date for the altarpiece, Sabellico clearly
reflects the prominence of the work in Venice (Appendix I).

Sanudo's notice of the San Giobbe altarpiece is found in a list
headed "Questa sono cosse notabile in diverse chiesie" included with other
lists of information about Venice related to a section entitled "Laus urbis
venetae," of his work on Venice known as the Cronachetta, Venice, 1493:4

A Santo Joppo uno altar di Zuan Bellin che di le belle
cose habbi fatto & bene.

Sanudo's notice and its context also underscore the contemporary fame of
the altarpiece with regard to the artist's personal achievement, which may
have been regarded not only as a matured oil technique, but also as a new
impressive type of altarpiece executed in it. Together the two notices
provide strong indications that the fame of the San Giobbe altarpiece in
Venice was attached not only to the personal achievement of the artist in
mastering the oil technique on a monumental scale, but to the format and
theme of a particular type of sacra conversazione altarpiece (Appendix I).

The first critical account we possess, that of Giorgio Vasari, is
mainly stylistic. In his preface to Part III of the Lives he evaluates
Bellini's style generally as "dry, hard, and harsh," ugly in foreshortening
and perspective, and lacking in vivacity and harmonious blending of colour.5
Nonetheless, in his specific comment on the San Giobbe altarpiece he
admires its "molto disegno e bellissimo colorito." Vasari's remark that
the picture excited great admiration when it was new, and has always been
praised as a most beautiful work, and especially his implication that it
established Bellini's name as an oil painter, leading to his appointment by
the state, may reflect a local, Venetian fame which went beyond technical and artistic merit. Vasari does not give evidence for an exact date of the altarpiece but implies that the San Giobbe altarpiece was created at an early or mid-point in Bellini's career. Venetian writers of the seventeenth century, such as Marco Boschini, in their efforts to glorify the Venetian state, praised Bellini as a Renaissance master rivalled only by Raphael himself, and the first great master of Venetian painting. They affirmed in Bellini's work precisely those qualities of perfect draughtsmanship, perspective, vivacity, and subtle colouring which Vasari had attributed to what he termed the third phase or modern style of painting. A shift of critical opinion in the eighteenth century preferred to see Bellini's pupil Giorgione as the initiator of the modern school of Venetian painting. In order to explain the undeniable beauty and mastery exhibited in the San Giobbe altarpiece the undated work was shifted by certain critics to the end of Bellini's oeuvre and seen as evidence of the brilliant pupil's influence on his aged master. In the early nineteenth century reconsideration of the early notices by Sabellicco and Vasari invalidated the proposed date of 1510, and in antedating the altarpiece to an earlier point in the artist's career scholars were able to reinstate Bellini's reputation for inventive genius.

Critical analysis of the San Giobbe altarpiece in the present century has been primarily stylistic and formal. An efflorescence of aesthetic appreciation, especially evident in the Italian literature, reflects in part a persistent and defensive vindication of Bellini as a great Renaissance master who made an original and decisive contribution to the development of European painting. As noted above, a eulogistic
tradition was established by seventeenth century Venetian writers. At times a similar chauvinistic intent seems to underlie more recent hyperbolic praise of Bellini's pious spirituality and his humanistic vision of man in harmony with his environment. More specifically, Bellini's importance to Venetian painting has always been seen as the introduction of the new technique of painting in an oil medium which was brought to luminous perfection by his pupils Giorgione and Titian. Roger Fry's attempt in 1900 to codify a development in Bellini's style from the hatched modelling within closed contours of the tempera technique to the fused modelling and dissolution of firm outline to suggest atmosphere which was possible in the oil technique, contributed to a new phase in Bellini scholarship. The primary task in this century has been the complex one of defining the scope and development of the numerous oeuvre, in which few works are securely datable, by means of stylistic analysis and connoisseurship. In 1914 Roberto Longhi published an article which established the importance of Piero della Francesca to the development of Venetian painting. Bellini scholarship became involved in the analysis of Piero's influence on Bellini, whether by direct contact at Rimini, for which the Coronation of the Virgin at Pesaro may be evidence, or indirectly, through Antonello da Messina's San Cassiano altarpiece painted in Venice in 1476. The San Giobbe altarpiece is invariably cited as that work which exhibits Bellini's liberation from the linearity of Mantegna's style and the restrictions of the tempera technique and the mastery of modelled form and atmosphere in the oil technique. The painting lends itself to a wide range of positions in the oeuvre according to the individual critic's perception of the sources of influence on Bellini and the degree of precedence and independence he wishes to ascribe to the master in the introduction and development of oil
painting in Venice. The major Bellini exhibition which was held at the Palazzo Ducale, Venice, in 1949, was a unique opportunity for scholars to work with a major part of the oeuvre in a single location. In her review of the exhibition A. Brizio observed an important result was the de-emphasis of the debate concerning the introduction of oil painting by Antonello da Messina or Bellini, and a renewed appreciation of Bellini's independent inventive genius, which flowered in those years in which the San Giobbe altarpiece was created. However, this appreciation has hardly passed beyond the analysis of Bellini's formal achievement and the enumeration of his compositional motifs, his legacy to later Venetian painters. Although certain elements of iconography in the San Giobbe altarpiece have been commented upon, a comprehensive and penetrating iconographical study and interpretation of the work has never been carried out.

The distinguishing formal features of Venetian painting, rich colour and the interest in decoration and surficial design, have seduced critics into a one-sided, sometimes restrictive, stylistic approach which characterizes Venetian style in comparison and opposition to a Tuscan paradigm. Thus Luigi Coletti, in his survey of Venetian painting, describes Venetian style as spontaneous, non-intellectual, and "anti-classico," a style which "speaks" directly, without the intellectual reflection of Florentine painting:

...pittura "parlata," piuttosto che "scritta"!

Only recently have scholars begun to appreciate Venetian painting in its broader contexts of religious and social function and to study paintings in terms of historical type, physical site, religious function, and patron, in an attempt to understand the meaning which determines form. This
"iconological" approach to Venetian painting, initiated by Panofsky in the area of Titian scholarship, is being pursued by David Rosand in Titian studies and is well stated in the introduction to his article on Titian's Presentation of the Virgin painted for the Scuola della Carità. Rosand's students are applying this approach to Titian and to other Venetian artists, including Giovanni Bellini. Rona Goffen has identified the iconographic type of the half-length Madonna in Bellini's religious painting, which she studies from the point of view of form, iconography, site, and devotional function. Most significantly for Bellini studies, she has demonstrated the importance of the previously neglected Byzantine tradition in Venetian Renaissance art, which stems from Venice's historic association with the East. Julia Keydel has made a formal study of the function of Bellini's sacre conversazioni and other major altarpieces as part of the architecture and decoration of their church settings, and provides a basis for broader interpretations of Bellini's most important religious paintings.

The more traditional critical approaches to Venetian painting noted above, the predominance of traditional religious themes in Bellini's extant oeuvre, and the general lack of documentary and textual sources of information regarding commissions and relations of the artist with his patrons have severely retarded iconographical study of Bellini's work. However, a number of isolated studies have appeared in recent years. Notable in the area of religious iconography are Goffen's study of the half-length devotional Madonna, cited above, and Millard Meiss' analysis of Bellini's ability to invest a naturalistic component of the painted composition, such as sunlight, with religious meaning by arguing that Bellini manipulates
natural light in this landscape in order to express the direct revelation of God to Saint Francis. Such studies suggest a depth and extent of iconographic invention in Bellini's work which awaits elucidation.

We have only an intimation of a third area of iconography, the ideological traditions of the Venetian State. Due to the destruction by fire of the cycle of history paintings in the Sala del Maggior Consiglio, Venice, a major category of Bellini's work has been almost entirely lost. Bellini commenced his participation in this vast and prestigious project in 1479 and seems to have been engaged on it for the balance of his career. The cycle consisted of episodes in a part legendary, part historical event of Venetian history in which the Doge mediated a dispute between Pope Alexander III and Emperor Frederick Barbarossa in 1177, thereby obtaining special favour for the Venetian state from the Pope. It is an important instance of the famous Venetian propensity for expressing ideas of state in religious themes which was observed by Roger Fry:

...religion was cultivated...for the opportunities which it provided for symbolizing the ideas of the state... As Robertson points out, the San Giobbe altarpiece is one of a number of works which show the effects of Bellini's work on the large-scale canvases for the Venetian state. Surely these effects were not only an increased "freedom of execution" and "luminosity" in technique, but included a reflection of those ideological themes and motifs which were engaging the attention of Bellini and his patrician patrons at the time.

The rich and complex iconography of the San Giobbe altarpiece has not received the attention it merits. Examination of its religious meaning has not gone beyond an appreciation of the pious expressions and suitability of the work to its function as a religious image over the Eucharistic
Lack of documentation has discouraged iconological interpretation. In the most recent monograph on Bellini, Robertson offers a methodical review of the problem of textual sources, with only a fleeting observation of the possible allusion to the Annunciation, as a theme of meditation, in the Virgin's gesture and the vault inscriptions. In his review of Robertson's monograph on Bellini, David Rosand criticizes as a "serious omission" the author's neglect of Bellini's early interest in the Byzantine traditions of Venice, of which the San Giobbe altarpiece is "the monumental culmination" "as well as being the foundation for new developments." Julia Keydel provides a valuable preliminary groundwork for an iconographical interpretation of the altarpiece in her study of the relation of the altarpiece to the physical context of its frame and the interior of the church in which it was situated. This relationship implies a continuity of the illusionistic space and atmosphere of the painting with the real space and atmosphere of the church and thus a coexistence of the viewer with the divine beings.

The richness of the symbolic motifs and compositional features of the altarpiece indicate that a thorough-going iconographical study could be of value in reaching a fuller understanding of Bellini's inventiveness and the depth of his response not only to religious themes, but to contemporary Venetian ideology. The altarpiece became the prototype for the sacra conversazione theme in Venetian painting for some thirty years following its execution. The type is distinguished by the elevation of the Virgin on a marble throne enriched with antique decorative motifs, and by the architectural space of a vaulted baldacchino or chapel which is continued more or less illusionistically by the frame of the altarpiece. The
golden semi-dome and the lute-playing angels are secondary motifs which were frequently repeated in later Venetian painting. It seems probable that the popularity of this type of monumental sacra conversazione in Venice was due in part to its symbolic resonance. Investigation of the circumstances in which Bellini's work was conceived might reveal the particular significance of its salient features. In this respect, its site in a monastic church associated with a charitable institution receiving ducal patronage and the dual sources of imagery in the Veneto-Byzantine and Roman traditions must be considered. This inquiry will make more apparent Bellini's invention and the depth of his response to Venetian ideology and allow a fuller understanding of his importance for later painters such as Vincenzo Catena, Lorenzo Lotto, Giorgione, and Palma il Vecchio, not only in technique and style, but iconographic motifs.

This study focuses on a single work, the San Giobbe altarpiece, in an attempt to recreate, as far as is possible, a context for the interpretation of its meaning. The individual elements, the total architectural and spatial composition, and the worshipper's experience of the work in situ will be described. The specific features of the sacra conversazione version popular in Venice will be defined by comparison with the sacra conversazione types developed in Tuscany and other areas of Italy. The history of the foundation, major building phases, and nature of patronage of the Chiesa di San Giobbe will be outlined. The final chapter will consider the specifically Venetian associations intermeshing with the traditional devotional function of the altarpiece, which may account for that type of sacra conversazione of which the San Giobbe altarpiece was an exemplar.
NOTES


"First are seen in beautiful majesty the Mother with Child: never has so gifted a form been seen nor an idea so devout; it can truly be said: she is a deity!"


"On the side towards the Piazza is seen Venice the Virgin, who with her incorrupt purity, shields herself from the insolence of others, and leans on the world, because she alone among all others remains incorrupt, and intact from barbarians and Imperial tyrants."

Description of a painted decoration on the wall facing the Piazza in the room preceding the Anticollegio in the Palazzo Ducale, Venice.


"Zambelin se puol dir la primavera
Del Mondo tuto, in ato de Pitura:
Perche da lu devira ogni verdura,
E senza lu l'arte un inverno giera."

8. See Appendix I.

9. See Appendix I.


13. This is the subject of a work by F. Heinemann, Giovanni Bellini e i belliniani, 2 vol., Venice, 1962 (hereafter cited as Heinemann, Bellini).


19. Fry, Bellini, p. 4.


21. G. A. Moschini, Guida per la città di Venezia..., Venice, 1815:

"Questa tavola segue pur essa l'ordini dell'altare, ed e veramente lucida di gran pregi."

Lionello Venturi, Le Origini della Pittura Veneziana, 1300-1500, Venice, 1906, p. 378:

"...tutto portava all'imponenza sulle masse dei fedeli. Forse pochi quadri al mondo hanno più e più completamente e con maggior sincerità aiutato la chiesa a mantenere il suo prestigio."

22. Robertson, Bellini, p. 87.

24. Keydel, "Altarpieces."
CHAPTER TWO

DESCRIPTION OF THE ALTARPICE

Giovanni Bellini's San Giobbe altarpiece is the first extant Venetian sacra conversazione of that monumental, centrally-unified type which was so popular in Venetian and North Italian painting of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. The sacra conversazione does not form an illustration of a sacred dogma, the holy liturgy, or a biblical narrative. An etymological study of the term by Rona Goffen has shown that it should not be interpreted according to modern usage referring to the act of conversing, but rather that its ancient biblical and patristic meaning, more appropriate to the first Trecento adumbrations of the composition, can be translated as "holy community." With the rise of late Mediaeval spiritualism popular belief grew in the ability of saints, pious and exemplary individuals privileged in their reception of grace, to intercede with Christ on behalf of the suppliant worshipper who placed himself under their sponsorship. In the sacra conversazione the figures of the saints may represent the visual equivalent of the esempi of vernacular Mendicant sermons, pious lives that are models to the worshipper in his effort to obtain grace; they are also qualified advocates of the worshipper before God, whose throne they approach so closely.

The basic theme of the sacra conversazione is the coexistence of a group of saints with the Madonna and Child in a transcendent "holy community." The figures do not necessarily speak among themselves but are in a shared state of contemplation and revelation, sometimes supplication,
united by their common reception of grace from God. The Virgin Mary conveys the supplications presented by the saints to her son and in turn dispenses divine grace to the faithful: she herself is the highest mediator. The Christ Child represents the means of man's salvation, the incarnate Sacrament. The physical and psychological unity of the composition and the immediacy of the representation make the real approach of the saints to the throne of God credible to the viewer/worshipper and encourage him to feel the possibility of direct entrance to the "holy community." Thus the sacra conversazione can function not only as an altarpiece but also, in conjunction with a tomb, as a means for the donor/s to obtain direct and personal intercession to insure their admittance to the "holy community" which the painted image embodies.

In Bellini's altarpiece the Virgin Mary, holding the Christ Child seated on her right knee, is elevated on a marble throne enriched with antique decorative motifs which is approached by three steps, on which are seated three angels playing musical instruments (Fig. 6). In front of and to either side of the throne stand six saints, Francis, John the Baptist and Job, the titular saint of the church and the saint to whom the altar is dedicated, on the Virgin's right, and Dominic, Sebastian and Louis of Toulouse on her left. The figures are situated in the unified space of a perspectively constructed Renaissance chapel consisting of classical columns and entablature, supporting a coffered barrel vault and an apse vaulted by a half-dome faced with gold mosaic. The painting cannot be fully comprehended apart from the original marble frame in the form of a triumphal arch from which it has been separated (Fig. 3). The architectural design and sculptural decoration of the columns, entablature, and
round arch of the frame are continued perfectly by the spatial construction and details of the painting (Fig. 7). The unified setting in which the holy figures commune appears as co-extensive with that of the viewer/worshipper.

Elevated, central, frontally viewed, the Virgin Mary dominates the figural composition (Fig. 8). Her regal enthronement combines the hieratic majesty of the Queen of Heaven with the gentleness of the Mother of Mercy. Her modesty and austerity are suggested by the low white wimple, which hides her hair, and the heavy blue robe which parts at the torso to allow a discrete glimpse of rich brocade. While the heavy fall of drapery imparts a solid monumentality to her figure, the wide-spaced large eyes, narrow nose, and small mouth, Byzantine artistic conventions often used by Bellini in his Madonnas, give a contrasting ethereal quality to her face. She is serene, yet alert and responsive: her attention is directed outward. Crowe and Cavalcaselle observed that she is "looking forward as if struck by some external event, yet full of calm benevolence." She appears to look outward to her left, over the viewer, into the interior of the church and into the light which falls so brilliantly upon her face, wimple, and raised hand. The direction and meaning of the raised left hand are an important aspect of the work, and will be discussed below in Chapter Five.

Supported by his mother's right hand as he sits upright on her knee, the nude infant Christ seems physically small and helpless against the dark mass of the Virgin Mary's body (Fig. 8). Yet there is something Eucharistic in this pathetic and victimized aspect of the Christ Child. Mary's hand seems almost to frame the area of Christ's side that will receive the lance wound. His own left hand is crossed against his chest as if to indicate this source of man's salvation. The meaning of this gesture is underscored
by the parallel gesture of St. Francis, the Alter Christus, to the wound in his own side. The Christ Child's right hand extends downward in the direction of Job's supplicating hands and his lips are parted as if requesting mercy from the Heavenly Father on his servant Job. The solemnity of the Christ Child was particularly noted by Lionello Venturi when he identified a type of Bellinesque Christ Child having an "energia morale," raising his eyes to the skies in an act of defeating adversity while the light shines on him. In the San Giobbe altarpiece it seemed to him that "Gesù prevede le future lotte, le legge nell'alto ove guarda." Indeed, Christ appears almost to rise toward the fall of brilliant light as he gazes so intently ahead, up and over the viewer, into the lofty vault of the church. He has a spiritual aspect which evokes both the sorrow and the joy and triumph of the Incarnation and the Resurrection.

The imposing marble throne on which the Virgin and Christ Child are seated enhances the majesty of the King and Queen of Heaven and emphasizes their pre-eminence among the accompanying figures (Fig. 8). It is elevated and ascended by a flight of three steps, the lowest extending the width of the chapel (diagram of chapel plan, Fig. 9). The antique motifs of the Lombardesque relief decoration echo those of the columns and the altar antependium itself, and recall decorative motifs appearing on the frame of Piero della Francesca's fresco of Sigismondo Malatesta before St. Sigismund at Rimini of c. 1450. The crowning cornucopia and acanthus scroll motifs and the floriated disc are found in Paduan works. The rich effect of the throne is heightened by the red panel of the throne back, and the polychrome stone of the steps. The throne and steps do not appear as a three-dimensional construction occupying a defined position in space, but
rather as a single stepped, pyramidal, geometric shape, parallel to the picture plane. No spatial recession is indicated for the throne or the steps and the base of the steps is entirely obscured by the figures standing before it. The effect is of a frame completely enclosing the figures of the Virgin Mary and Christ Child (except at the point where the Virgin Mary's head overlaps the crowning stone disc) which tends to deny their location in a space subject to the laws of vision.

Included in the planar zone of the throne and its wide base of steps are the crowning motifs of disc and cross (Fig. 6). The marble disc, supported by acanthus volutes, rosettes, and cornucopia, and decorated in relief with a central rosette and a concentric floral motif, is a rare and intriguing motif. It may have been suggested by the similarly placed disc in Mantegna's S. Zeno altarpiece of 1456-1459 although there it is articulated by a pierced tracery (Fig. 26). This motif is discussed further in Chapter Five below.

The golden vault of the apse appears as a dome of heaven which provides a celestial setting for the communion of the holy figures (Fig. 6). The cupola dorata became a favourite motif in Venetian painting following the San Giobbe altarpiece, and may indeed have been introduced by Bellini. The motif is rich in symbolism. Rosand described Bellini's use of the gold mosaic as the expression of celestial light through empirically comprehensible phenomena, manifesting itself as a purer distillation of natural light or as the reflection of golden mosaic.

K. Dorment sees additional Venetian associations in the use of the gold semi-dome, which will be dealt with further in Chapter Six below.

The semi-dome vault is faced with a mosaic design of five ten-winged
Byzantine cherubim (Fig. 6). Cherubim, the second of the nine orders of angelic beings, are believed to be gifted with knowledge as the first order of seraphim are gifted with love. Bellini has copied his motif directly from the mosaic of Christ in Glory Surrounded by Nine Orders of Angels in the centre cupola of the Baptistery at San Marco, Venice, commissioned by Doge Andrea Dandolo in the mid-Trecento, where the solitary cherub occupies an important position on an axis directly below the Christ (Fig. 10). Like the San Marco Baptistery prototype, each cherub bears a roundel with a Latin inscription. In Bellini's altarpiece the archangel Gabriel's greeting to the Annunciate, AVE GRATIA PLENA (Luke 1:28), is repeated on each of the five cherubic discs. In the Quattrocento this was translated as "Hail thou that are full of grace" which reflects the popular belief that the Virgin Mary, by virtue of her meritorious submission to God's will at the moment of the Annunciation, had been accorded a position as supreme mediatrix. The longer Latin inscription above the row of cherubim is:

AVE VIRGINEL FLOS INTEMERATE PUDORIS.

which can be roughly translated as "Hail Undefiled Flower of Virgin Modesty," and is a further allusion to Mary's virtue at the Annunciation.

The depiction of the cherubim in the San Giobbe altarpiece not only alludes to divine knowledge, which is ultimately knowledge of God's plan for the destiny of the world, but also carries from the original Baptistery site an association with the Resurrection and the rebirth of the individual, made possible by the Annunciation and Incarnation referred to in the roundel inscriptions. Finally, the remarkably Byzantine character of the mosaics of the centre cupola of the San Marco Baptistery, observed by Pallucchini, and the national character of the church itself endow the emblematic cherubim with potent significance.
The appearance in the San Giobbe altarpiece of the *cupola dorata* establishes an important motif in Venetian painting. The use of Byzantine style motifs found in the Trecento and earlier mosaic decorations of the vaults of the state church of San Marco characterizes Venetian painting after Bellini. This interest could manifest itself as a design of intertwining vines and birds, found in Early Christian art, a Biblical narrative, such as the Crucifixion, or dogmatic representation such as the Byzantine Deesis.\(^2\)

The dark green, eight sided canopy with its gold edged quinquepartite fringe is suspended from the centre and rear of the coffered barrel vault, directly over the Virgin Mary and on a vertical axis with the cross and disc. The canopy is a traditional and ancient accoutrement of the altar, an "infallible sign of the presence of the Supreme."\(^2\) It was also a symbol of sovereign authority above the throne of a secular ruler. In addition to signalling the queenship of Mary, this motif may have an additional meaning in Venetian ideology which will be discussed in Chapter Six.

Directly associated with the canopy are four leafy branches of a tree or bush which may be tentatively identified as laurel. The branches appear to be bound above the apex of the canopy, to the cable from which it is suspended. Although the appearance of it in this work is not unusual, considering the profuse vegetal garlands found in the painting of Mantegna and the Paduan school, the restriction of vegetation to this single sheaf at the highest point in the central vertical axis which links the Virgin Mary, the marble disc and gold cross, and the canopy, seems to indicate a specific function. Generally, evergreen foliage such as the laurel signifies the new life springing from Christ and is a symbol of resurrection and
everlasting life.23

The youthful and harmonious effect of the three music-making angels, placed in a prominent position at the spectator's level of vision, has been frequently admired (Fig. 6, 11).24 Each is individual in physical features and expression while united with the others by a common serenity and grace. The central angel is most directly linked to the Virgin Mary and the Christ Child by his higher position, frontality, and the correlation of his head and right foot to the important central vertical axis of the composition.25 Bellini has in fact given this angel the most divine quality of the three as is seen in the silken, parted hair, the brightly lit forehead, and large raised eyes. The angel is playing a lute, the most popular instrument of the period in which the altarpiece was painted.26 It is held up to the full fall of light and displays a rose carved in a beautiful and intriguing geometric design of interlacing six-pointed stars. The angel on the left, more boyish in character, plays a bowed instrument which may be a viola or a lira da braccio,27 also a popular instrument of the period. The third angel, partly obscured by the black robe of St. Dominic, plays a lute similar to that of the centre angel and looks downward, as if absorbed in the melody. Groups of music-making angels appear frequently in Trecento painting, regaling the Virgin Mary in depictions of her triumphs, the Assumption of the Virgin, and the Coronation of the Virgin, the latter being a favourite theme in Venice, as has been recently demonstrated (Fig. 12).28 Bellini's interest in the precise depiction of contemporary musical instruments and of small ensembles that mirrored the most intimate refined instrumental music of his period, resulted in the best known, identifying motif of the Venetian sacra conversazione altarpiece.29 Indeed, angels clearly inspired by Bellini's musicians may be seen in the
altarpiece which flanked Bellini's altarpiece in the Church of San Giobbe, the Presentation in the Temple by Vittorio Carpaccio, 1510. The primary function of the angels in the painting, beyond their role as heavenly attendants on the King and Queen of Heaven, is to evoke a heightened religious feeling in the worshipper. Music constitutes an essential part of the Mass, whether Gregorian chant or polyphony. It is tempting to imagine that in Bellini's altarpiece the angels are performing a motet, a musical form newly introduced to the church service in the fifteenth century and which was most often composed in honour of the Virgin Mary, and for which the vault inscriptions may provide lyrics.

The six saints are depicted as a group of communing figures in close proximity to the enthroned Virgin Mary and Christ Child; each stands quietly, neither active nor engaged in conversation, in a state of common grace and shared revelation. In addition to their psychological unity, the saints are defined as existing in a single moment and place by the unified space of the architectural setting. They are symmetrically disposed in two groups facing each other in a spatial zone, defined by the Corinthian columns, painted and stone, and the barrel vault which they support, somewhat forward of the Virgin Mary and Christ Child (diagram of chapel plan, Fig. 9) who are somewhat isolated by their position further back at the entrance to the apse, and by the enclosing effect of the throne. Furthermore, there is a subtle discontinuity between the scale and viewpoint of these two figures and the others. Yet the vividly realistic architectural space of the chapel, the brilliant, unified fall of light and distinct shadow (for example, that cast by the Virgin on the back of her throne, Fig. 8), and above all, the glances and gesture of John the Baptist,
Job and Louis toward the Virgin and Christ Child strongly affirm their coexistence with and their real presence before the saints. The saints are withdrawn and meditative, not in active response to an outward stimulus as the Virgin and Christ appear to be, and even the three saints who look toward them seem abstracted as if gazing on an inner vision. There is a sense of waiting. The brightly lit Mother and Child are mysteriously real and visionary at the same time.34

The spatial zone which the saints occupy, intermediate between the worshipper and the enthronement apse, has been called a "vestibule," an area of petition and colloquy.35 The characterization by means of attributes, dress, gesture and physiognomy of each saint's life, his individual mode of meditation, his personal way of obtaining grace and receiving divine knowledge not only provides models of meditation and meritorious lives to guide the worshipper, but also testifies to each saint's qualification to approach the King and Queen of Heaven and act as intercessors for the worshipper, and most particularly for the donor of the altarpiece, who was buried nearby.36

Job, the saint of the altar dedication, is represented as an old man in robust health showing no marks of his affliction.37 The profile view of the saint and the direction of his clasped hands toward the Christ Child contradict the actual depth that must separate the two figures, considering the distance posed by the flight of steps (Fig. 9). He appears in fact to be very close to the Christ Child, who makes his equivocal gesture of acknowledgement towards Job. It is difficult to discern whether his lips are parted in supplication but his whole attitude expresses humble reverence and an intent beseeching. The fact that Job is naked as he was
when in sterquilinio (Job 2:7, 8) and yet shows no sores or other sign of suffering suggests the textual moment for his depiction may be the Theophany, when, following his series of afflictions and torments, "the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind" (Job 38:1). A second possibility is that the portrayal of Job gazing upon the Christ Child refers to his prophecy of the Resurrection:

For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:

And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.

Job 19:25, 26

Not only is Job given the strongest intercessory position of the six saints, but he represents a funerary theme.

The pose of Job is similar, at least in the upper body, to the figure of Job in the Lombardesque tympanum dating to the 1470's, over the entrance portal of the church (Fig. 13, 14). The pose evidently impressed Venetians for it reappears again in Bellini's own Sacred Allegory in the Uffizi, and in the works of his followers, as one of the plague intercessors, Job or St. Sebastian (Fig. 43).

St. John the Baptist, the last prophet and the precursor of Christ, appears almost invariably in a place of honour on the right hand of the Virgin in Italian painting; in Venice he was considered a powerful intercessor and is the saint most frequently seen sponsoring donors (Fig. 6, 9). Here he retains his honoured proximity to the Christ Child, being closest in depth; that is, closest to the steps approaching the throne. Appearing awkwardly behind and between St. Francis and Job, he seems to be lending greater authority to Job in his supplication of the Christ Child and to St. Francis who, although not as frequently as St. John the Baptist, also
appears as a patron saint in Venetian painting.

As the founder of the monastic Order at the church of San Giobbe, St. Francis stands with the Baptist and Job, the titular saint of the church, in the honoured position to the right of the Virgin Mary and Christ Child (Fig. 6, 9). The portrayal of St. Francis, his right hand lowered and extended toward us displaying the *stigmata*, the left pointing to the wound in his side, visible through a rent in his robe, recalls his vision of Christ and reception of the *stigmata* experienced at La Verna as reward for his ascetism and perfect identification with the suffering of Christ at the Crucifixion. The cross carried by the Baptist, an attribute of both saints, is seen behind the head of St. Francis, a further reminder of his piety and wilderness revelation. The directness of this saint's confrontation with the viewer, his heavy-lidded eyes gazing out over our heads with a pensive, suffering expression, and of his display of the wounds of the Crucifixion are remarkable.

Bellini has given the gesture of the right hand in particular a striking eloquence: it may be compared with that of the saint's revelation in his possibly earlier Frick *St. Francis*, discussed by M. Meiss. This type of gesture was followed by later Venetian painters, most notably by Giorgione in his Castelfranco *sacra conversazione* (Fig. 18) where the pose of the San Giobbe St. Francis appears reversed. Since the two saints of the Castelfranco *sacra conversazione* have recently been interpreted as portraits of the donor and his son, Tuzio and Matteo Costanzo, one wonders if the type of St. Francis created by Bellini in his San Giobbe altarpiece also arose as a result of a private commission, in which case it may be that St. Francis' gesture of revelation is linked with the
belief in his efficacy as an intercessor in a funerary context, as will be discussed further below.

The first saint on the Virgin's left is St. Dominic, the founder of the Dominican Order, identified by his tonsure, clean shaven face, and black and white Dominican robes (Fig. 9, 15). He is engaged in the form of meditation for which he and his Order were known, the study of the sacred scriptures and philosophy. He reads a holy book, held carefully in two hands like a precious object. His facial expression is serious and intent, suggesting that his attention is completely engaged by the subject of his reading. Although it does not seem usual for St. Dominic to appear in an altarpiece with St. Francis, it is not unprecedented. The type of St. Dominic seen in the San Giobbe altarpiece seems to have been created by Antonello in his San Cassiano altarpiece, completed in 1476 and enjoying wide fame in Venice (Fig. 29). Bellini may have used the figure first in his sacra conversazione altar in Santi Giovanni e Paolo, Venice (Fig. 34), and it appears after the San Giobbe altarpiece in Giovanni Buonconsiglio's sacra conversazione of 1502 for the Oratorio dei Turchini (Fig. 52).

The classically posed nude body of St. Sebastian (Fig. 6, 15) is placed with St. Francis in the most forward plane of the painting (Fig. 9). Much praised in the past for its perfection it still strikes the attention of modern viewers, not the least on account of the dreamy and ecstatic half-smile which appears on the face of a figure pierced by two arrows. In the fifteenth century St. Sebastian was revered more for his miraculous recovery from arrow wounds than for his actual martyrdom, a fatal beating by clubs. The arrow was an emblem of the plague and St. Sebastian was invoked against the frequent outbreaks of pestilence to
which Venice and other trading centres along the Adriatic coast of Italy were susceptible. He and St. Roch, also invoked against the plague and whose relic was preserved in the Confraternità di San Rocco, Venice, were two of the most frequently represented saints in Venetian painting. The subject of St. Sebastian gave the Renaissance artist the opportunity to represent the nude male body al antica, and it is interesting to conjecture that a similarity in theme suggested the representation of a Christian saint as an Apollo-like figure. In pagan belief, Apollo was invoked against the arrows of plague which he inflicted on mankind.

The pose of St. Sebastian in Bellini's altarpiece is the culmination of the development of a type in a series of works by Andrea Mantegna, Antonello da Messina, and Bellini and reappears frequently in the work of Bellini followers, such as Cima da Conegliano (Fig. 47) and Bartolomeo Montagna (Fig. 35).

The identity of the youthful Bishop saint entering from the opening between the two right columns is less certain than that of the other saints (Fig. 6, 9). Vasari, 1568, refers to him as Sant'Agostino and is followed by Zanetti, 1771. The most frequent identification, now generally accepted, is San Luigi da Toulousa, that is, St. Louis of Toulouse, the elder brother of King Robert of Naples, who gave up his claim to the throne to join the Franciscan Order, dying as a young man at the age of 24. He appears frequently in Franciscan altarpieces although he does not appear to receive the same veneration as Anthony of Padua or Francis himself. The saint wears a richly decorated cope over a white alb reaching to his feet, and a white, undecorated mitre, while he holds his crozier with his gloved left hand. Although the brown Franciscan tunic beneath the
cope is more common in representations of St. Louis of Toulouse, G. Kaftal notes that he may also be depicted wearing the white alb. It is possible that this garment, which was occasionally worn by consecrated kings,\(^5^7\) is intended to emphasize St. Louis' denunciation of his right of royal primogeniture for adherence to the Franciscan rule of poverty and service to the sick and poor.\(^5^8\) The border of the bishop's cope is decorated with a series of saints standing within aedicules (Fig. 15, 16). The appearance of at least two Franciscan saints helps to confirm his identity as St. Louis. One of these, seen at the lower edge of Fig. 16, may be St. Bernardin of Siena, who from the time of Doge Cristoforo Moro (died 1471) was the second titular saint of the church, and who appears in a sculpted figure, together with St. Louis and St. Anthony of Padua, over the entrance portal to the church (Fig. 13). On the cope border above St. Bernardin is Job, shown in the same pose, reversed, as his life-sized counterpart in the painting. This is predominantly a Franciscan altarpiece with the emphasis on the titular saint of the church and the founding saint of the church's Order. The absence (or possibly reduced presence on St. Louis' cope) of St. Bernardin of Siena, a Franciscan saint important in the history of the church, is notable.

Certain relationships between the figures in the painting are given importance by compositional devices, most effectively by the orchestration of hands. The most important relationship is that between Job and the Christ Child and Mary (Fig. 6). Job's look is not returned by the Child or by Mary and their gestures are not strongly directed toward him. However, a subtle denial of spatial recession, noted above, in the planar effect of the throne, and the pose of Job, allows a compositional line to
be set up, on the picture plane, extending from Job's raised arms and hands to the Christ Child's down-reaching arm and from there to the area of the lance wound in his side up to the raised hand of Mary, which, reverting to a spatial reading, may be seen as turned out and toward Job. An extension of this compositional line includes the sacramental gestures of St. Francis, that of his left hand paralleling Christ's left hand and his lowered right hand counterpoised to Mary's upraised left hand. As noted above, it is possible to interpret Christ's action on one level as requesting mercy from on high for Job, backed up by Mary who as Mediatrix, aids in the intercessory act. St. Francis' possible intercessory role may also be implied by the composition. Reading spatially again, the centre and right angel appear to look toward Job who is situated some distance in front of them and to their right, thus further emphasizing his importance (Fig. 11). A secondary relationship completes a triangle formed by Job-Mary-Sebastian. This is set up compositionally by a line extending from the raised hand of Mary down through the hands and book of St. Dominic to the arrow piercing St. Sebastian's abdomen, and emphasizes the obvious intercessory role of St. Sebastian.

The great importance given to the architectural setting of the San Giobbe altarpiece by the large proportion of the painting which it occupies and by the integration of the painted with the real architecture of the stone frame is less evident in the present cut state of the altarpiece separated from its frame. In its original state the figures occupied only one-third of the height of the painting, with the upper one-third almost entirely barrel vaulting (Fig. 7). Because the painted architecture is integrated with its stone frame, there is a direct relationship between the altarpiece
and the architecture of its physical, church setting. In its airy, lofty height, and deep space, and in its soft lighting and quiet calm, the Renaissance chapel in which the figures are situated harmonizes with the interior of the church itself. The framing unit includes the altar, with its two steps, and the ascending zones of the marble frame: base, columns, and entablature. The marble is a light, warm colour showing traces of gilding and polychromy. The decoration is a Lombardesque vegetal relief similar to that on the frame of Bellini's destroyed altarpiece in the Chiesa dei S.S. Giovanni e Paolo, Venice (Fig. 17). The perspective construction of the painting, its low vanishing point at the base line, the steep recession of the entablature have been of special interest in recent analyses of the altarpiece. The viewer's experience at the foot of the steps to the altar would be of looking into the painting at the level of Bellini's cartellino and thence upward to the Madonna, the cross, and up into the vault overhead. Light seems to flow into the painting through the two right columns, painted and marble. The effect is of a lofty and deep chapel extending forward into the area of the church, illuminated by a common source of natural light from the upper right, presumably admitted by the windows in the entrance facade.

Perspectival construction and consistent illumination create a unified architectural space in which the holy beings coexist in a single moment and place. The realism of this representation, the placement of the perspective vanishing point relative to the viewer's position before the altar and altarpiece, the advancing effect of the architecture and the shared features of architectural form and of illumination with the interior of the church, would have created the strong illusion of the physical
contiguity of the space occupied by the holy community with that of the viewer in the church. The stone frame, which is crucial to this effect of coexistence, defines at the same time the limit of the painted sanctuary and the entrance to it. The visual effect of the sacra conversazione is that of a progressive movement through a series of zones of increasing holiness approaching the enthroned Madonna and Christ Child (Fig. 9). The probable tombstone of the donor of the altarpiece would be located in the terrestrial zone of the viewer's immediate space. The following zone is that of the altar which leads to the entrance of a vestibule zone which opens on either side and which is defined by the triumphal arch frame, the two corresponding painted Corinthian pillars, and the barrel vault. The position of the succeeding zone, occupied by the Christ Child and Mary, further back at the entrance to the apse is defined by the position of the canopy suspended directly above the Madonna from the rear arch of the barrel vault. This spatial position is ambiguous, the chapel having a visual vacillation between shallow and profound depth. This visual vacillation may be the corollary of an inconographical vacillation in the representation of the Virgin and Christ Child which is discussed below in Chapters Three and Five. The large scale of the Madonna and Christ Child, which contradicts a consistent depth recession, and their planar, compositional links with the saints, described above, create the impression of their proximity to the group of exemplary and intercessory saints. On the other hand, their actual distance from the saints as indicated by the architecture, the complete enframement by the throne, the somewhat different viewpoint (the Madonna seems to be viewed from a viewpoint higher than that placed at the baseline by the architectural construction), and brilliance
of illumination all set the Christ Child and Virgin apart in a separate zone behind the vestibule (Fig. 9). The final zone is the atmospheric space of the golden apse and the coffered barrel vault, which soar above the figures for fully one half of the picture area, and which contains only the cross, canopy, laurel, and the designs of the apse mosaic.
NOTES

1. The painting is 4.71 x 2.58 m and is composed of transverse panels which have separated slightly in the course of years causing some cracking in the paint surface (S. Moschini-Marconi, Gallerie dell'Accademia di Venezia, Opere d'Arte dei Secoli XIV e XV, Rome, 1955, pp. 67-69, hereafter cited as Moschini-Marconi, Accademia). It was cut down at the top by 55 cm., possibly when it was removed from its original site in the church of San Giobbe, Venice, between 1814 and 1818 and framed and hung in the Accademia, Venice, where it may be seen today (Erich Hubala, Madonna Mit Kind, die Pala di San Giobbe, Stuttgart, 1969, p.3). See also F. Valcanover, Gallerie dell'Accademia, Novara, 1970, regarding removal of the three canvases by Carpaccio, Bellini, and Basaiti from San Giobbe to the Accademia; and Moschini-Marconi, Accademia, p. 68. Ibid., p. 67, notes that the painting was restored in 1895 by S. Centenari to consolidate the paint surface and to improve the connection of the panels. A limited cleaning was conducted on the occasion of the Bellini exhibition in 1949 by M. Pellicioli. The painting is generally accepted to have been executed in the oil medium although a mixture of oil and tempera may have been used.

J. A. Crowe, G. B. Cavalcaselle, The History of Painting in North Italy, 1871, ed. Tancred Borenius, 3 vol., London, 1912, vol. 1, p. 163 (hereafter cited as Crowe, Cavalcaselle, North Italian Painting) observe: "Technically he [Bellini] had won the secret of half impasto, of local and diverse glazing..." C. Wilson, "Giovanni Bellini's Pesaro Altarpiece, Studies in its Context and Meaning," (Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1977), pp. 316-319, notes that Bellini's precise technique has not yet been determined. Bellini appears to have used other vehicles than oil, such as varnishes, that are now difficult to identify (Renato Ghiotto, Terisio Pignatti, Opera Completa di Giovanni Bellini, Milan, 1969, p. 85, hereafter cited as Ghiotto, Pignatti, Opera Completa). The attribution of the altarpiece to Bellini is secured by the signature which appears on the cartellino affixed to the lowest of the three steps of the Virgin Mary's throne. There is no evidence of a date on this cartellino (Moschini-Marconi, Accademia, p. 68, and personal observation, Venice, May 1978). The painting is now viewed in the lofty Room II of the Accademia, Venice, flanked by its companions from San Giobbe, The Presentation of Christ in the Temple, by Vittorio Carpaccio, 1510, and Christ in the Garden by Marco Basaiti, 1516 (Moschini-Marconi, Accademia, no. 104, p. 105, and no. 46, p. 48). The painting receives natural illumination from a skylight with a particularly fine and striking effect as the gold details and the rather large area of gold used in the apse mosaic react to the changing light and passage of clouds above. The altarpiece was originally situated in a monumental carved marble frame over the second altar on the right in the church of San Giobbe. During the period in
which the altarpiece was painted. San Giobbe was the largest monastic institution, next to the Servi, in the Sestiere of Cannaregio. It can be seen in the map of Venice by Jacopo de' Barbari, 1500, Venice, Museo Civico Correr (Fig. 1). The altar and altarpiece frame may be seen in the church today (Fig. 2), with a substituted painting by Lattanzio Quarena 1768-1853, scenographer at the Fenice, Venice, of the Theophany of St. Job (F. Finotto, San Giobbe, Venice, 1971, pp. 20-21) (Fig. 3). Bellini's altarpiece, dedicated to the patron saint of the church, was flanked on the right by Basaiti's Christ in the Garden over the Foscari altar, and on the left by Carpaccio's Presentation over the Sanuto altar (Fig. 4).

No documentation for the altarpiece survives nor are there other textual sources of information for the patron and date. The coat of arms which appears on each of the two bases of the columns of the marble frame of the altarpiece is probably that of the family of the patron, or possibly of the confraternity, who commissioned the work (Fig. 5). For discussion of possible identifications of the coat of arms, see Chapter Five, p. 82 and n. 47.


3. Ibid., p. 201.


7. Similar gestures possibly inspired by Bellini's San Giobbe Christ Child are seen in Lorenzo Costa, Madonna and Four Saints, Bologna, San Petronio, Fig. 51, and F. Bissolo, Madonna with St. Michael, St. Veronica and Two Donors, London, National Gallery, reproduced in Heinemann, Bellini, fig. 349.

8. L. Venturi, Le Origini, 1906, p. 376. Venturi makes these observations with regard to the Christ Child in the Madonna col Bambino Benedicente, by Bellini, undated, now in Venice, Accademia (Moschini-Marconi, Accademia, no. 69, plate 68).


10. Precedents for the throne in Bellini's oeuvre are found in the Coronation of the Virgin, Pesaro, Museo Civico, c. 1475, and the Madonna Adoring the Sleeping Christ Child, early 1470's, Venice, Accademia (Ghiotto, Pignatti, Opera Completa, no. 68 and no. 73).

12. The slight indication of recession in the entablature of the throne is negated by the overall planar effect.


17. S. Bettini, I Mosaici di San Marco, Bergamo, 1944, pl. CVIII; R. Pallucchini, La Pittura Veneziana del Trecento, Venice, Rome, 1964, pp. 76-77, 276, fig. 248; Lorenzetti, Venice, 1961, p. 210, identifies the order of the angelic figure as "Sciences (ten-winged angels)," "sciences" being an alternate name for the angelic order gifted with knowledge. The significance of the cherubim will be discussed in Chapter Six.


19. Robertson, Bellini, p. 87.


21. The mosaic semi-dome motif is used by Bellini in two later sacra conversazione altarpieces, the Pesaro triptych, 1488, Venice, S. Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, (Fig. 39), and the San Zaccaria altarpiece, 1505, Venice, San Zaccaria, (Fig. 40). Ghiotto, Pignatti, Opera Completa, no. 134, p. 100, and no. 183, p. 106; and by Cima da Conegliano, Madonna and Six Saints, Parma, Galleria Nazionale, (Fig. 50); Lorenzo Costa, Madonna and Four Saints, Bologna, San Petronio, (Fig. 51). The use of gold mosaic and Byzantine decoration
reaches an extreme in the work of Marco Marziale (Figs. 44, 49) and Giovanni Buonconsiglio (Fig. 52).


23. R. Hatfield, Botticelli's Uffizi Adoration, Princeton, New Jersey, 1976, p. 41. In Bellini's oeuvre a similar plant is found in the lost altarpiece for SS. Giovanni e Paolo, Venice, of c. 1475, (Fig. 34), in the form of a garland spanning the loggia, from which the Virgin Mary's curtain of honor is suspended. In Carpaccio's Miracle of the Cross at the Rialto, 1494-1501, Venice, Accademia, the foliage is attached to large proccessional candles (Moschini-Marconi, Accademia, no. 94, plate 94). It appears in Boccaccino's Annunciation (Fig. 46).


"ne si puo descrivere a pieno la grazia e la bellezza di tre Angeletti, che siedono a pie di quella Vergine, chi di loro tocca la viuola, il liuto & il viuolino: d'arie cosi gentili e di movimenti cosi soavi, che rapiscono gli animi, qual maniere di figure destano somma divotione nelle mente de'federali."

25. See note 61 below.


27. See large colour details in Heinemann, Bellini, vol. 1, pl. IX, X, of the head of this angel and of his instrument with its tuning head crafted as a grotesque. The lira da braccio is a pear shaped, bowed instrument with round shoulders, 3-5 strings, and two bourdon strings, which run outside the fingerboard (Encyclopedia of World Art, 1965 ed., s.v. "Musical Instruments," by Emmanuel Winternitz, and Emmanuel Winternitz, "A Lira da Braccio in Giovanni Bellini's 'The Feast of the Gods'," AB 28 (1946):114-116. The instrument played by the solitary angel in Bellini's San Zaccaria altarpiece (Fig. 40), 1505, is clearly identifiable as a lira da braccio. The instrument in the San Giobbe altarpiece is smaller and lacks the round shoulders. It is possibly an earlier form of the lira da braccio, which descends from the Medieval viola, and ultimately from the Byzantine lyre, "a type of medieval fiddle played by Elders in sculpture of the late Middle Ages and later by countless angels up to the sixteenth century" (Ibid., p. 114).


"Giovanni Bellini always rendered his musical instruments with an accuracy and neatness...and with a complete understanding of the playing technique."

31. See note 24 above.
32. New Catholic Encyclopedia, 1967 ed., s.v. "The Roman Mass": "the sung liturgy is the highest type of spiritual expression, most capable of moving the soul to fervent devotion and giving full articulation to social worship."

The special role which music played in Venetian religious and civic ceremony has been discussed by E. Rosand, "Music and the Myth of Venice," RQ 30 (1977):511-537. See Chapter Six below.
36. It is possible that one or more of the saints in the altarpiece are onomastic saints representing the donor and members of his family. In Bellini's triptych in the Sacristy of the Frari, Venice, the husband and three sons of the deceased, Franceschina Pesaro, are represented by the four saints. Goffen, "Icon and Vision," p. 512. See further discussion in Chapter Five below.

On the individuality of the saints, Filippo Baldinucci noted in Notizie de' professori del disegno da Cimabue in qua., Ed con note ed aggiunte di Giuseppe Piacenza, Milano, 1811, vol. 5, p. 489:
"ciascheduno molto propriamente rappresentati."
L. Venturi, Le Origini, 1906, p. 378:
"esecutori della legge, che si muovano in varia guisa indipendenti."
37. G. Kaftal, Saints in Italian Art, Vol. 3, Iconography of the Saints in the Painting of North East Italy, Florence, 1978, does not list St. Job, nor does he appear in the two previous volumes. The iconographical type that is indexed for St. Onuphrius is similar to that of Job, for example, vol. 3, no. 222, p. 796, an old hermit with long white beard, hands joined in prayer (died c. 400). Compare St. Onuphrius in a painting of the Madonna with two saints by Lorenzo Lotto, Rome, Borghese Gallery, P. Bianconi, All The Paintings of


Ridolfi, Meraviglie, 1648, vol. 1, p. 66, is mistaken in his description of Job as piagato or sore-covered.

The representation of St. Job in Italian painting is rare. A fuller discussion of Job's significance in the altarpiece follows below, Chapter Five.

38. The substitution of Lattanzio Quarena's Theophany of Job after Bellini's pala was removed to the Accademia might reflect upon the subject of Bellini's altarpiece as it was understood in the nine­teenth century.

39. Finotto, San Giobbe, 1971, p. 53:

"Connessi al problema del dolore vengono toccati magistralmente altri argomenti, come la resurrezione della carne, l'attesa del Messia, l'onnipotenza e l'onniscienza di Dio. La liturgia usa con una certa frequenza il libro di Giobbe nel Breviario, nel Messale e per il passato lo uso specialmente nelle officiature funebri," (my emphasis).

40. Robertson, Bellini, p. 66, notes a precedent for the portal Job in Masaccio's Story of Theophilus fresco, 1427, Brancacci Chapel, S. Maria dei Carmini, Florence (L. Berti, Masaccio, University Park, Penn., 1967, fig. 60-61, pp. 110-111).

41. Ghiotto, Pignatti, Opera Completa, no. 149, pl. XLIV-XLV.


44. T. Pignatti, Giorgione, London 1971, p. 97, fig. 12, notes Longhi's proposal of Lorenzo Costa's St. Petronius with Saints Francis and Dominic at the Pinacoteca, Bologna, as a source for Giorgione's St. Francis.

45. T. Pignatti, lecture on Giorgione, September 28, 1978, in which he

46. Kaftal, _Saints_, vol. 3, 1978, no. 84, pp. 257-264. St. Dominic died in Bologna on August 4, 1221 and was canonized by Pope Gregory IX in 1234. In the absence of Dominic's usual attribute of the lily, it is possible that this saint might be Thomas Aquinas.

47. R. Pallucchini, _I Vivarini_, Venice, 1961, pl. 113, pp. 112-113, reproduces the polyptych at Lecce, Museo Provinciale, by Antonio and Bartolomeo Vivarini, in which the crowning panel is a Trinity adored by St. Dominic on the left and St. Francis on the right.

A later work by Fra Bartolomeo (1472-1517) is a drawing in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, which is a design for an altarpiece of the Virgin and Child Adored by Saints Dominic and Francis. The two saints kneel and embrace in the foreground (H. Reitlinger, _Victoria and Albert Museum, A Selection of Drawings by Old Masters in the Museum Collections_, London, 1921, no. 10, p. 8). On exhibit at the Museum, June, 1979.


49. Kaftal, _Saints_, vol. 3, 1978, no. 269, pp. 910-920. St. Sebastian was a knight and martyr. He died in Rome on 20 January 287, beaten to death with clubs or maces.

50. Boschini, _La Carta_, 1660,

"De più ghè Sàn Bastian, martire degno:
E chi no vede quella positura,
Non ha vista dassegno una figura;
La xe de carne; l'è tuta desegno."


M. Meiss, _Painting in Florence and Siena after the Black Death_, 1st ed., 1951, p. 77, notes that St. Sebastian had been invoked against the plague since the 7th century, but that his cult did not begin in Tuscany until after the Black Death in 1348. It was widely believed that the plague was inflicted by God as a punishment of collective sin.

52. In earlier art St. Sebastian was depicted as a knight holding the emblematic arrow.

54. Versions of St. Sebastian by Mantegna are in Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, in Paris, Louvre, and in Venice, Ca' d'Oro (A. Martindale, N. Garavaglia, The Complete Paintings of Mantegna, New York, 1967, no. 43, pl. XI-XIII, no. 56, pl. XXVII-XXX, and no. 73, p. 114). Compare also Antonello da Messina's St. Sebastian at Dresden Gemäldegalerie, G. Vigni, All the Paintings of Antonello da Messina, New York, 1963, pp. 28-30, plates 54-58, dated 1475-1476, which may have been seen by Bellini in the Church of San Giuliana, Venice.

Bellini may have developed his St. Sebastian through a series of attributed, but still disputed, works beginning with the panel of saints at Matelica, Museo Piersanti, 1445-1450, then the St. Sebastian Triptych, Venice, Accademia, 1460-1468(?), the St. Vincent Ferrer altarpiece, Venice, SS. Giovanni e Paolo, 1464-68(?) (Ghiotto, Pignatti, Opera Completa, no. 3, p. 85, no. 40, p. 90, and no. 57, p. 91).


55. Boschini, La Carta, 1660, calls him Sant'Alvise, Venetian dialect for St. Louis. The saint is identified as San Luigi da Toulousa by Ridolfi, Meraviglie, 1648, p. 66; Baldinucci, Notizie, 1681, vol. 5, p. 489; Crowe, Cavalcaselle, North Italy, vol. 1 p. 163; and Moschini-Marconi, Accademia, p. 68.

56. Kaftal, Saints, vol. 3, 1978, no. 183, pp. 621-628. St. Louis was the bishop of Toulouse. He died on 19 August 1297 and was canonized in 1317.

Finotto, San Giobbe, 1971, p. 20, identifies him as the Venetian San Magno. This is the identification that appears on the descriptive card placed on the altar, the former site of the altarpiece in Chiesa San Giobbe.


58. Bellini depicts St. Louis of Toulouse in similar dress of cope over white alb in a lateral panel of his altarpiece of the Coronation of the Virgin, c. 1475, Pesaro, Museo Civico (Ghiotto, Pignatti, Opera Completa, no. 68, fig. 68 I, p. 93).

Antonio Vivarini also depicts the saint wearing a white alb in a half length panel at Avignon which bears a Latin inscription referring to St. Louis' contempt for worldly rule (R. Pallucchini, I Vivarini, Venice, 1961, plate 126).
59. The framing unit consists of two low steps approaching the altar, the altar itself, and succeeding zones of the frame: the vegetal freize of the base, the zone of the stemma, the columns with their vegetal stems; the Corinthian dolphin capitals, the architrave, dark freize and cornice, the arch with its three fasciae of floriate decoration and archivolt rosettes, the spandrels with vegetal decoration, and the square pediment.

60. Robertson, *Bellini*, pp. 86-87: "...the effect...of the whole structure fronted by the marble frame projecting into the church, so that the Virgin and her attendant saint [sic] and angels are gathered under a sort of Baldacchino in the body of the church itself." Keydel, "Altarpieces," chapter 7, p. 154, sees the effect of a full-sized chapel within the closed interior of the church, and pp. 159-160 describes it as "a structure subsumed within the larger edifice of the church environment and distinguished from it," and "a subordinate sanctuary space incorporated into the environment of the church," with a function analogous to that of a ciborium. See Hubala's description, *Madonna Mit Kind* 1969, pp. 7-10.

61. The position of the cartellino bearing Giovanni Bellini's signature at a point on the vertical axis beneath the centre angel's right foot and at the viewer's level of vision is interesting. Not only does this location ensure the artist's commemoration but it implicates him in the ascending movement of the composition and may possibly express his personal hope of salvation. Goffen, "Icon and Vision," pp. 510-511, writes with regard to Bellini's type of half-length Madonna behind a parapet, "In signing his name on the cartellino affixed to the parapet, Bellini bears witness both to his faith and to his profession."
CHAPTER THREE

A FRAMEWORK FOR A CONSIDERATION OF THE VENETIAN

SACRA CONVERSAZIONE ALTARPIECE

Until recently the primary basis for the definition of the Italian sacra conversazione altarpiece has been formal rather than iconographic. It is conventionally identified as that representation of the enthroned Madonna and Christ Child with attendant saints and angels which is placed within a naturalistic landscape or architectural interior. The most impressive and monumental form of the sacra conversazione altarpiece is generally considered to be the North Italian altarpiece in which the enthronement is situated in an enclosing, perspectively constructed Renaissance architecture. In the past, study of the sacra conversazione has been undertaken with the purpose of tracing the origin of this mature form, by reconstructing the historical development of its enclosing, ecclesiastical architecture in Tuscan and North Italian painting. No satisfactory iconographical account of the sacra conversazione altarpiece has been proposed, although iconographical interpretations have been suggested for some of the separate works considered important in its historical development.¹

The apparent discrepancy between the phrase "sacred conversation" and the fifteenth century representations of non-conversing holy beings it has been applied to in recent art historiography led Rona Goffen to probe the scriptural and patristic etymology of the term.² She has been able thereby to clarify the basic theme of this altarpiece type, by translating sacra conversazione as the "holy community" which inspired meritorious
actions and devotion in the worshipper, and which interceded for his personal salvation with the Virgin Mary and Christ. She suggests that the thematic origin of this type of altarpiece and of the basic formal principles for its development in Italian painting was in answer to the representational requirements of nascent mendicant, particularly Franciscan, devotion in the early Trecento.

With her thematic, rather than formal, definition Goffen identifies incipient sacra conversazione paintings in the titular Franciscan church of San Francesco in Assisi, the early Trecento frescoes of the Madonna and saints in the Lower Church. That the four frescoes of the Lower Church which she cites, and also the Ambrogio Lorenzetti lunette fresco in Sant'Agostino, Siena, c. 1335, may all have been commissioned by a patron (patrons in the case of the Siena fresco) with the intention of commemoration and of invoking intercession, is suggested by the appearance of the donor's arms, his portrait, or his patron saint, and/or the association with an altar and tomb. In the Assisi frescoes Goffen notes the illusionistic effects of the painted framings which subtly convey the impression of a single space, a kind of loggia, in which the saints and Madonna stand, their lower bodies obscured by a balustrade (Fig. 19). These works show the first developments toward a unified group of figures, placed within a single space contiguous with that of the viewer. The intercessory theme requires the physical and psychological unity of the group of saints with the Madonna and Christ Child, which maintains the pre-eminence of the latter, and an immediacy of the representation to the viewer/worshipper which creates the sense of a potential crossing between temporal and divine realms. With these basic criteria, Goffen suggests a historical
development of the *sacra conversazione* from the Trecento, vertically separated, half-length figures placed against a gold ground, having subtle indications of a unified spatial environment and of a psychological focus on the Madonna and Christ Child, to the full length figures existing in a group centred in the enthroned Madonna and Child in a naturalistic landscape or architectural setting.

Goffen has defined the *sacra conversazione* altarpiece as a distinct type, whose distinct origin is the response in visual art to the "vocally expressed hope for mediation" of the early fourteenth century. She has distinguished it from the *Maestà* and mariological polyptych traditions which have been considered the sources of the *sacra conversazione*. Her tightened criteria thus exclude some of the key works in the conventional construct of the *sacra conversazione* tradition. The work of artists who were considered important in the unification of the polyptych composition into the single panel *sacra conversazione*, such as Masaccio and Fra Angelico, fall out of the direct line of development from the San Francesco, Assisi, frescoes. For example, Shearman's reconstruction of Masaccio's Pisa altarpiece of 1426 (Fig. 19) proposes a single panel whose pendant arches preserve the vertical divisions of the polyptych, a format which is preserved in Fra Angelico's Annalena altarpiece, c. 1445-1455, and even in Domenico Veneziano's St. Lucy altarpiece, mid 1440's (Fig. 23). Goffen has not only illuminated the theme and possible function of the *sacra conversazione*, but somewhat reduced the importance of Tuscan painting in the early Quattrocento, whose strong fascination has caused some historical myopia. If the first examples of the *sacra conversazione* can be identified in the early Trecento, the history of the perspectival, centrally unified
interior, which previous studies have virtually identified with the history of the *sacra conversazione*, can now be seen as a somewhat later development of the basic principles of the type, reflecting a slight iconographic (for Goffen, devotional) change.\(^{10}\)

An important author of the conventional construct of the *sacra conversazione* tradition is Johannes Wilde who in 1929 laid a framework which is still the basis for most recent studies.\(^{11}\) His outline of the historical development of the *sacra conversazione* was made in the context of a demonstration of the prime importance of a South Italian painter, Antonello da Messina, influenced by a Tuscan painter, Piero della Francesca, in the invention of the late fifteenth century North Italian altarpiece. Wilde's is a formal approach, identifying the problem as that of placing the enthroned Madonna and saints within a completely enclosing architecture which represents part of a church interior. The history of the *sacra conversazione* thus becomes the development of formal means to achieve unity of pictorial space and the representation of a Renaissance architectural interior of life-size scale. Tentative efforts in this direction may be seen in some late Medieval works of the categories from which Wilde believed the *sacra conversazione* type had arisen, the *Maestà*, and the mariological polyptych. In the work of early Quattrocento Florentine painters, Fra Angelico's *Annalena* altarpiece and *San Marco* altarpiece, c. 1437-1441, (Fig. 22)\(^{12}\) and Domenico Veneziano's *St. Lucy* altarpiece (Fig. 23) Wilde sees increasing spatial order and definition. The idea of a completely enclosed architectural space is first introduced in sculpture by a Tuscan, Donatello, in his altar for the *Santo*, Padua, 1446-1450 (for elevation of G. Fiocco, P. A. Sartori reconstruction, see Fig. 25)\(^ {13}\) whose concept is
transferred to painting by a North Italian painter, Mantegna, in his San Zeno, Verona, altarpiece, 1456-1459 (Fig. 26). Following Wilde's construct the North Italians fail to realize the potential of the idea, and it is Piero della Francesca, whose leading and neglected role in Italian painting had been so compellingly promoted by Roberto Longhi fifteen years earlier, who is the inventor of the solution in his sacra conversazione painted for Federigo da Montefeltro of Urbino, 1472-1474 (Fig. 27).

John Shearman's reconstruction of Masaccio's Pisa polyptych by an examination of the cut edges and cast shadows of the central panel of the Madonna (Fig. 20) simply brings to light a forgotten stage in Wilde's construct. Rather than Fra Angelico, as proposed by Wilde, Shearman sees Masaccio as the first Florentine painter to achieve the unification of the traditional Gothic polyptych into a single panel by means of the "new concepts of focused space and light," and the creation of a unified spatial setting for the Madonna, saints and angels. Basic elements of Masaccio's composition are then developed by Fra Angelico, for example, the pendant arches, which preserve polyptych-like divisions, the continuous, laterally extending steps, the manner in which the saints are disposed on or before the steps in rows receding in depth, and the unified lighting. Shearman proposes that Masaccio's is the germinal work which presupposes all later sacra conversazione compositions in Italian painting. With regard to iconography, Shearman notes the Eucharistic and redemptive meanings within this particular work, but makes no comment on the meaning of the sacra conversazione as a theme, other than that Massacio's formal innovation allows the figures to be shown in a "single moment and experience, even a single thought."
In his series of important studies on Piero della Francesca's Montefeltro altarpiece, Millard Meiss commences from Wilde's basic thesis of Piero's invention of the long awaited Renaissance ecclesiastical interior. According to Meiss, Piero is the first Italian artist to represent the Madonna with saints in the interior of a church, which became typical of altarpieces in all North Italy. A possible earlier Italian attempt at this effect might be Neri di Bicci's fresco of San Giovanni Gualberto and saints within a kind of arched and vaulted loggia, in the cloister of San Pancranzio, Florence, 1454-1455. Convinced of Flemish influence, in particular that of Jan van Eyck, on Piero's invention, Meiss sees the iconography of the Montefeltro Madonna as the Maria-Ecclesia iconography of earlier Flemish works where the Virgin is depicted within a church interior.

The most recent resume of the development of the sacra conversazione altarpiece available to me is that of Julia Keydel in her study of the relation of Bellini's altarpieces to their original locations. Once again, Wilde is cited as the basic discussion but Keydel attempts to introduce a new iconographic factor which arises from her investigation of the funerary connotations of the architecture of the Venetian type of sacra conversazione, and which anticipates Goffen's proposed theme of mediation and personal salvation.

For Keydel the focus of the development of the sacra conversazione is still the architectural setting. However, she introduces religious iconography as a determining factor in addition to the older notion of stylistic evolution. She argues that the Quattrocento Italian painter was subject to two sets of demands that were in a sense conflicting; while
committed to perfecting the new perspective he had to meet the traditional requirements of the religious painting: the distinction between the spiritual and the mundane, and the propagation of faith in the possibility of transcending earthly boundaries. On one hand, the concern was to create a unified image according to Renaissance principles, the perfect illusion of the coexistence of holy beings, and of the viewer's access to them. On the other hand, religious tradition demanded that the hierarchy of the figures be preserved and the levels of approach to the divinity defined, a tradition exemplified in Byzantine church architecture and decoration, whose defined areas or zones increase in holiness with proximity to the high altar and sanctuary. The medieval pictorial devices employed to express the relationship of earth to heaven, for example, polyptych panels conveying relative hierarchy of figures, or gold grounds representing the realm of heaven, would inevitably defeat the projection of depth in a centrally unified image. The vestigial vertical division of the picture plane which has been observed in Masaccio's Pisa altar with its pendant arches also persists in works by Fra Angelico (Fig. 22) and Domenico Veneziano (Fig. 23). A more successful alternative was the development of "interlocking spatial relationships" which subtly break down the unified pictorial space into a series of subordinate spatial units which can express relative hierarchy. For example, the figure of God the Father in Masaccio's Trinity (Fig. 37) has a viewpoint which diverges from the otherwise rigorous spatial organization as if to emphasize he is not subject to terrestrial law. The same principle seems to be operating in the ambiguous spatial location of the Madonna and Christ Child in Bellini's San Giobbe altarpiece, described in Chapter Two, p. 31, above. However, beyond
these devices, Keydel suggests that the conflict between unity and accessibility on one hand and hierarchy and distance on the other was resolved by the development of a platform or vestibule area in the architectural setting of the *sacra conversazione*, whose intended effect is projection toward the viewer/worshipper, to make contact and to give the impression of the accessibility of the holy figures and at the same time to interpose a zone, within a spatially unified interior, between the viewer and the enthroned King and Queen of Heaven. Furthermore, she suggests very tentatively, anticipating Goffen's recent interpretation of the *sacra conversazione* theme, that the enthroned Madonna and saints, and in particular, the projecting vestibule motif, may express the theme of the "eventual reception in heaven of the person responsible for commissioning the altarpiece."  

Thus the meaning and function of the vestibule area is to create the "impression that a meeting between the holy figures and the worshipper was possible within the environment of the church."  

The formal development of the *sacra conversazione* then becomes not just the evolution of a Renaissance church architecture, but the perfection of the illusion that the viewer is included, or potentially included in the sacred space inhabited by the holy beings, in Goffen's words the "holy community."

Keydel's discussion of the historical development of the *sacra conversazione* follows the now familiar sequence of Florentine works, beginning with Masaccio's Pisa altarpiece, with its incipient spatial unity. Fra Filippo Lippi's Barbadori altarpiece, S. Spirito, Florence, 1437 (Fig. 21) may adumbrate the vestibule effect and its commission by a private individual and similarity of imagery to that of the Wilton diptych, suggest a theme of personal salvation. The vestibule effect is first truly
apparent in Domenico Veneziano's St. Lucy altarpiece, mid 1440's, (Fig. 23), where the saints appear to stand on a platform projecting into the viewer's space. In Piero's Montefeltro altarpiece (Fig. 27) all the figures including the donor have been placed (as Meiss and Shearman have demonstrated) in the nave of a church interior, which functions as the "vestibule" zone, whose effect is achieved in a novel manner by the illusionistic forward projection of the architecture beyond the picture plane to encompass the viewer. Here again there is an obviously commemorative aspect and from what can be reconstructed of the commission there is very likely a funerary aspect. It is at this point that Keydel departs from the traditional thesis of Piero's invention of the sacra conversazione architectural setting. For her the plastic, illusionistic completion of the forward projecting painted architecture by the real frame of the altarpiece, and the close relation between the altarpiece and its church environment, which is seen in Bellini's San Giobbe altarpiece, is the ultimate realization of the formal requirements of the sacra conversazione altarpiece; to give the image the status of a physical presence within the environment of the church, and to vividly characterize the idea of the availability to the worshipper of the holy figures.

In short, Keydel's contributions are to emphasize the factor of religious iconography, and to suggest a specific religious theme, the reception to heaven of the donor by the saints and angels. She distinguishes the unique spatial effect of the Venetian sacra conversazione altarpiece, the Byzantine-like separation of spaces with individual meaning in order to define approach to the Virgin Mary and Christ Child whose compellingly illusionistic presence and coexistence with both the saints and the viewer
is achieved by Renaissance pictorial principles of focused space and light, a spatial effect which is epitomized by Bellini's San Giobbe altarpiece.

Longhi's marvellous intuition of the original effect of Antonello's dismembered San Cassiano altarpiece was Wilde's inspiration and has resounded in the minds of art historians since:

Unfortunately this had led to a neglect of the unique Venetian character of the monumental sacra conversazione altarpiece, with its combination of Byzantine and Renaissance spatial perceptions, as it was realized in the work of Giovanni Bellini and his followers into the sixteenth century, and of the circumstances of Venetian art in the late Quattrocento which favoured the maturation of this type.

In 1929 Wilde, proceeding from the thesis of Piero della Francesca's invention of the sacra conversazione architecture conveyed to Venice by Antonello, drew a reconstruction of the dismembered San Cassiano altarpiece (Figs. 29, 30). All that was available to him were fragments and copies of fragments of the lower, figural portion of the altarpiece: an engraving of St. George, the panel and an engraving of St. Nicholas, the central panel of the Virgin, the panel of St. Dominic, and a copy of St. Sebastian. His reconstruction of the vaulting was conjectural and based on his understanding of the architectural setting of Piero's Montefeltro altarpiece, and on what appeared to him to be reflections, both of the saints and the architectural scheme, in later Venetian painting, in particular Alvise Vivarini's altarpiece from Belluno, c. 1490-95, (Berlin, destroyed 1944; Fig. 43). Wilde
believed that the figures in Piero's Montefeltro altarpiece (Fig. 27) are situated in a church interior, partly in the barrel vaulted choir, and partly in the crossing, whose foremost closing arch is supplied by the viewer's imagination on the basis of the two cornice mouldings seen at upper left and right, all that is visible of the two foremost pillars of the crossing. For Wilde, this was the first completely enclosing ecclesiastical architecture depicted in a sacra conversazione altarpiece.  

The architectural scheme identified by Wilde in Piero's Montefeltro altarpiece is indeed that which is seen in later Venetian sacra conversazioni, where the figures are placed in an apse, or in one or two bays before the apse. However, Meiss and Shearman, taking account of the cut side edges and possibly top edge of the panel, have analysed the perspective construction of the composition, bringing to light quite a different intended effect. A reconstruction of the plan of the church interior by T. G. Jones shows that the group of saints, angels, and the seated Virgin, and the donor, are in fact situated in the nave of a life-size scale church, not in the choir or crossing, which areas are much reduced in size due to the depth recession of 45 ft. from the figures to the rear wall of the apse.

At left and right sections of the nave walls are visible...the small sections of the nave walls that are represented have, however, a powerful effect. They emerge in front of the empty space of the transepts and they presumably move forward without interruption beyond the frame. The observer senses that he is enclosed by them.

Meiss has made important observations on the relationships of this scheme, which he sees as novel in Italian painting, to the Venetian sacra conversazione altarpieces. First, he reminds us that the upper architecture of Wilde's reconstruction of Antonello's San Cassiano altarpiece, although
sound and convincing, is largely conjectural, and that Antonello may have followed the idea of placing the figures in the nave of a church, rather than in an apse. Secondly, he notes the limited dependence of the Venetian sacre conversazioni on this scheme. In the San Giobbe altarpiece, for example, the format is much higher, and the viewpoint lower. The architecture is more on the scale of a chapel rather than a church interior relative to the figures. Most importantly, the Venetians pick up the idea of architecture extending forward, but it has terminating members at the picture plane, often supplied by the actual frame. Those Venetian altarpieces which do depict one or more bays of a crossing or nave before the apse do not fully realize Piero's idea of a forward moving, non-terminated, encompassing architecture (see for example, Marcello Fogolino's altarpiece, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, c. 1510, Fig. 28, Madonna and saints by Vittore Carpaccio, Pirano, San Francesco, 1519, and Madonna and saints by Giovanni Buonconsiglio, Montagnana, Municipio). Thirdly, Meiss observes that the representation of the Madonna in an apse or under a tabernacle was enthusiastically adopted by painters in Venice. Shearman notes a Venetian tradition for the representation of the Madonna in a cappelletta (Figs. 31, 32). Finally, in fixing the date of the Montefeltro altarpiece to 1472-1474, Meiss is able to state the likelihood of direct contact with the work, which was probably hanging in the Franciscan church of San Donato a short distance outside Urbino, by both Antonello, travelling north to Venice, and by Bellini, engaged on the Coronation of the Virgin at Pesaro.

Robertson's 1977 study of the San Cassiano altarpiece, dedicated to Meiss, follows the lines of enquiry Meiss had set up. He observes that it is not at all certain that Antonello introduced the type of sacra
conversazione common in Venetian painting, due to the uncertainty of the date of Bellini's first monumental sacra conversazione painted for SS. Giovanni e Paolo, Venice, relative to it (Fig. 34). A re-examination of Wilde's arguments in the reconstruction of Antonello's San Cassiano altarpiece shows that the side walls of the apse may be too deep and that there is evidence of side lighting. A comparison with Fogolino's sacra conversazione in Amsterdam (Fig. 28) suggests the possibility of Antonello's composition being based on Piero's Montefeltro altarpiece scheme, with columns advancing toward the picture plane, admitting side lighting.

In short, there are strong indications that Antonello's altarpiece is not entirely responsible for the format of the Venetian type of sacra conversazione, that Bellini may have experienced the influence of Piero directly, as well as through Antonello's work, and most importantly there is a native tradition behind the development of the Venetian type of sacra conversazione, which is reflected in the predilection for the self-contained architectural space of a chapel or tabernacle, rather than the implication of an entire church interior. It seems that the type of sacra conversazione that was popular in Venice is in fact distinct from the basic concept of Piero's Montefeltro panel, and has, on one hand, a local tradition, as well as sources other than those indicated in the conventional line of sacra conversazione development. Furthermore, as will be argued in Chapters Five and Six, it may be that circumstances of Venetian painting and patronage in the late fifteenth century favoured a unique Venetian expression of a sacra conversazione theme of personal salvation.
NOTES


2. Goffen, "Nostra Conversatio," pp. 198-222. The term first appears in an Italian art historical context in the late 18th century and was popularized by Crowe, Cavalcaselle, North Italian Painting (Goffen, "Nostra Conversatio," pp. 198-199).


4. Ibid., fig. 10, Siena, S. Agostino, mid-1330's.

5. Ibid., p. 221, "...mystical supplication to individual saints for mediation seems to require their communion with the Mother and Son in a sacra conversazione."

6. Ibid., p. 220.


10. Goffen, "Nostra Conversatio," p. 220. She observes that the development of a real environment is contemporary with an emerging humanist conception of the saints as exemplary in their lives, rather than their miracles.


15. Murray, de Vecchi, Piero della Francesca, no. 29, oil, 1.70 x 2.48 m., probably commissioned by Federigo da Montefeltro, Duke of Urbino, for his burial place in San Bernardino, Urbino.


18. Ibid., p. 455, "... it seems inescapable that the turning-point towards the sacra conversazione came effectively with Masaccio's Pisa altarpiece...In later sacre conversazioni Masaccio's influence is naturally less obvious...but no less important in its general effect."

19. Ibid.


24. Ibid., pp. 9-14. Church images propagate "that faith in the power to transcend the apparently fixed boundaries of mundane experience," (ibid., p. 9). The religious theme is a scaffolding within which to make distinctions between levels of content while maintaining the character of a unified image, (ibid., p. 14).

25. Ibid., p. 9.


28. Ibid., p. 32.

29. G. Marchini, Filippo Lippi, Milan, 1975, no. 11; The Virgin and Child with angels and saints, Paris, Louvre, tempera panel, 2.17 x 2.44, willed by Gherardo Barbadori, d. 1429, for the Barbadori Chapel in S. Spirito and commissioned in 1437.


34. Wilde, "Die Pala," p. 71, "die nach allen Seiten geschlossene Bildarchitektur in Form eines monumentalen Kirchenraumes."


36. Meiss, loc. cit.

37. Loc. cit.


42. Ghiotto, Pignatti, Opera Completa, no. 75, p. 95.
CHAPTER FOUR

THE SACRA CONVERSAZIONE ALTARPIECE IN LATE
FIFTEENTH CENTURY VENICE

The monumental, centrally unified altarpiece of the Virgin enthroned with saints popular in North Italy in the late fifteenth century was first developed in Venice in the mid-1470's. It is distinguished as a type by the location of the enthronement in an enclosing, perspectival Renaissance architecture, in which a hierarchy of spatial zones are distinguished within the unified space to achieve the dual effects of the Virgin's simultaneous proximity and distance, and to create the illusion of the viewer's (or the deceased donor's) coexistence with and potential entrance to the holy community. The Venetian sacra conversazione type is distinguished by its high, narrow format (dimensions range roughly between 3.5 x 1.5 to 4.0 x 2.0 m.) and its low viewpoint related to the spectator's eye level, and by the placement of the figures within a church apse, or in one or two bays before an apse, which has the scale of a baldachin or chapel rather than that of a full-sized church interior. Lateral arches or entablatures extend forward to be terminated at the picture plane by painted members or illusionistically by the frame itself, so that the pictorial space of the "chapel" is related to the interior space of its church location. The figures are always disposed symmetrically around the frontally seated Madonna, who holds her son and rarely gestures, and the Christ Child, who often blesses with his right hand. The mood of this type of sacra conversazione is ceremonial, solemn
and musical; the angel musicians appear frequently, evoking a musical
harmony which pervades the warm atmosphere.

The architecture may be one of two forms: the vaulted loggia, open
to the sky, which has been described a "cuba," a tabernacle, or a baldacchino,
and the second, the closed and vaulted apse whose effect is that of a chapel
or sanctuary. The type of open, cross-vaulted tabernacle is that seen in
Giovanni Bellini's first sacra conversazione at SS. Giovanni e Paolo of the
mid-1470's, which is known only through an engraving by Zanotto and by a
watercolour reproduced in Fry, Bellini, 1900 (Fig. 34). The Virgin is
elevated on a high and ornate throne above a throng of saints and three
music making putti, within a cross-vaulted loggia which opens to the sky.
The forward extending arches probably corresponded with the architecture of
the stone frame which remains in the church, although Robertson has found
that Zanotto's engraved copy does not fit its dimensions (frame in SS.
Giovanni e Paolo, Fig. 17; photomontage, Fig. 33). It seems probable that
a single vanishing point fell on the baseline.

Bellini's San Giobbe altarpiece (Fig. 37) exemplifies the second
variety of architectural setting, the closed apse. It forms an archetypal
statement of the Venetian type of sacra conversazione: the single bay,
closed and vaulted, viewed centrally from a low point, completed illusionis-
tically by the frame (Figs. 39, 40). Both it and the Zanipolo altarpiece
set the characteristic grand dimensions and high format with its effect of
lofty space.

The two varieties of architectural setting, open and closed, appear
in various combinations in Venetian painting of the later fifteenth and
sixteenth centuries, with the open type appearing as the earlier development
giving way somewhat in popularity to the closed type after Bellini's San Giobbe altarpiece. The square plan, round arched and cross vaulted tabernacle, open to a landscape, is seen again in the *Enthroned Virgin with saints* by Bartolomeo Montagna, Vicenza, Museo Civico, c. 1485-1490 (Fig. 35). This open architecture is favoured by Cima da Conegliano, whose first version, influenced by Bellini's lost SS. Giovanni e Paolo altarpiece, is the *Enthroned Virgin and saints* dated 1493 for the Duomo at Conegliano (Fig. 36). In Bellini's San Zaccaria altarpiece of 1505 (Fig. 40) strips of landscape are visible at each side of the closed apse. The closed apse format of the San Giobbe altarpiece is closely followed by Romanino in his *sacra conversazione* at Padua, c. 1513 (Fig. 42).

The San Giobbe altarpiece is a magisterial statement whose basic scheme and severe solemnity and clarity re-echo in Venetian painting, frequently in a diluted and overworked manner. The many *sacre conversazioni* of Bellini's followers cull motifs from the outstanding examples, Antonello's San Cassiano altarpiece, 1476, and Bellini's Zanipolo, c. 1475 and San Giobbe, c. 1485 altarpieces, his Frari triptych, 1488, (Fig. 39) and San Zaccaria altarpiece, 1505, (Fig. 40). Alvise Vivarini's Belluno *sacra conversazione* (Fig. 43) is a particularly obvious pastiche of motifs borrowed from both Antonello and Bellini, for example, the St. George is borrowed from the San Cassiano altarpiece, and the pose of St. Sebastian is taken from Job in Bellini's San Giobbe altarpiece. The basic scheme of the *sacra conversazione*, the monumental, vaulted and centrally unified architectural space, extending forward to the picture plane and often to a completing frame, with the vanishing point at a low level on the central vertical axis in accordance with the position of the altarpiece above the viewer, is consistent.
It is highly probable that the basic scheme of the Venetian sacra conversazione was invented by Bellini. Although the loss of Antonello's San Cassiano altarpiece precludes solution of the debate over Antonello's or Bellini's precedence, various indications support the latter.\(^6\) First, the scheme of the Zanipolo altarpiece shows a dependence on Venetian tradition, in the housing of the Virgin in a vaulted baldacchin, and in the "cuba" form of architecture.\(^7\) Secondly, Bellini had access to the same influences acting on Antonello, for example, Meiss suggests that both saw Piero's Montefeltro altarpiece and both appear to have been influenced by advances in the sculpture of Rizzo and the Lombardi.\(^8\) It is quite possible that the Zanipolo altarpiece dates before the 1475-1476 San Cassiano altarpiece and in fact Bellini's San Giobbe altarpiece of c. 1485 shows far more evident influence in technique and motif of Antonello's sacra conversazione than does the Zanipolo altarpiece. The Zanipolo altarpiece is painted in tempera while the San Giobbe altarpiece shows a mature oil technique influenced by Antonello's sense of volume and modelling, and placement of warmly illuminated form against deep shadow.\(^9\) Furthermore, in the San Giobbe altarpiece St. Dominic, and the Virgin's brocaded dress, are direct appropriations from Antonello's altarpiece (Figs. 8, 15, 29). Thirdly, the throne of the Zanipolo Virgin (not repeated in later Venetian sacre conversazioni) is a distinctly Venetian type, comparable with that of Bartolomeo Vivarini's Enthroned Virgin with Saints, Naples, Museo Nazionale, 1465,\(^10\) and with Gentile Bellini's Enthroned Virgin, London, National Gallery, after 1469.\(^11\) Thus Bellini's development of a Venetian sacra conversazione scheme seems to be based on the unification of a Venetian tradition for the representation of the enthroned Virgin with new principles of Renaissance architecture and
pictorial perspective, and sculptural concepts of form made possible by modelling and the approximation of light effects in the newly introduced oil technique.

There is a tradition in Venetian painting for the representation of the Madonna in an enclosing architecture having the effect of a tabernacle, ciborium or reliquary. In Lorenzo Veneziano's signed and dated Madonna, Paris, Louvre, 1372 (Fig. 31)\(^{12}\) the Madonna is seated within a small-scale, square, central-plan baldacchino, open on four sides, whose wide pointed-arches and columns support a canopy in the form of a church facade (complete with balconies, arched window, rosette and pinnacles). There is an attempt at perspective recession in the Gothic architectural forms, but the view of the vaulting is exterior, and the scale of the tabernacle is greatly reduced in relation to the figures.

In his panel of the *Virgin Enthroned*, Venice, Accademia, c. 1460-1465, (Fig. 32)\(^{13}\) Antonio Rosso da Cadore attempts to subject a similar architecture, conceived in a Renaissance formal vocabulary, to perspective construction. The Virgin is seated in a throne decorated with symbols of the evangelists in a square, central-plan structure with a cross-vault supported by four round arches, the foremost opening at the picture plane. The lines of the pilasters and of the spandrels are flush with the edges of the panel, bringing this architecture forward to the picture plane. The musician angels, however, are depicted in front of the columns, on tiny platforms that appear to project forward from the picture plane, and define an area of approach for the worshipper. The view of the interior of the cross-vaulting from below is more realistic, but, as in Veneziano's panel, the architecture is dwarfed in relation to the figures. The structure opens onto a landscape.
vista which lies far below in the distance.

These two works appear to provide sources for the open type of Venetian sacra conversazione scheme first seen in Giovanni Bellini's Zanipolo sacra conversazione (Fig. 33), which is now constructed according to the laws of perspective and life-size scale, providing a realistic space for the figures.

There was a tradition in North Italian art of the earlier fifteenth century for the centrally-unified architectural setting, constructed perspectivally on a low viewpoint, for the Virgin seated on a high throne. This is seen in Mantegna's high altar for San Zeno (Fig. 26) with its unified perspective, low viewpoint and high enthronement, and illusionistic framing architecture. The vaulted court consists of fully Renaissance columns and entablature extending forward to the picture plane to be completed illusionistically by the framing architecture. Because the idea of a church interior appears to be abandoned, Mantegna's architectural setting for the Virgin and saints is given only tributarial importance by the conventional construct of the history of the Italian sacra conversazione. Mantegna's scheme was preceded in Venice by the triptych painted for the Scuola della Carità by Antonio Vivarini and Giovanni d'Allemagna, Venice, Accademia, 1446 (Fig. 24), where the Virgin is seated in a canopied throne between attendant angels and the Four Fathers of the Church. The effect of this unified architecture, although open to a garden which is visible beyond the pinnacled walls, is of a church choir, lined with clergy stalls. Both works may have been inspired by Donatello's Santo high altar (Fig. 25) which probably consisted of a three dimensional architecture housing statues of the enthroned Virgin and saints.
A second line of Tuscan influence on the Venetian type of *sacra conversazione* is that of Piero della Francesca's Montefeltro altarpiece (Fig. 27) as discussed above. If Robertson's suggestion that Antonello's San Cassiano altarpiece followed Piero's scheme of a continuously forward extending nave interrupted by the frame, then the illusionistic completion of the architecture by the frame in Bellini's altarpieces, preceded by Mantegna's San Zeno altarpiece, is a Venetian development. Piero's influence then is limited to the Renaissance form of architecture with forward extending, rose-coffered arches, seen in Bellini's Zanipolo altarpiece, and closed apse, seen in the San Giobbe altarpiece.

Masaccio's *Trinity* fresco is a much closer anticipation of the architectural effect of Bellini's San Giobbe altarpiece (compare Figs. 37, 38). Although Bellini's father Jacopo was apprenticed in Florence and was present there for periods in 1423, 1424 and possibly 1425, it does not seem that he could or would have transmitted Masaccio's idea to Venice and no journey by Bellini to Florence is recorded. Robertson suggests that Pietro Lombardo, responsible for the Renaissance sculpture and architectural design at San Giobbe, could have brought a sketch of the *Trinity* from Florence. Scholars who have recently emphasized the importance of Masaccio's fresco as an "Urbild" for the San Giobbe altarpiece and later North Italian *sacre conversazioni* are U. Schlegel (1963), G. Robertson (1960, 1968), E. Hubala (1969) and J. Freiberg (1974). Although not a *sacra conversazione*, the "triangular figure-group rising into an illusionistic architectural setting" is "the ultimate prototype of the Venetian compositions." The two works share a similar square, central-plan chamber with side openings indicating lateral ante-chambers (note the entrance of St.
Louis from the right in the San Giobbe altarpiece (Fig. 9), a coffered barrel, vault, monumental framing architecture, constructed according to rigid perspective with a vanishing point near the base of the picture. Vasari's description of the Trinity evokes the San Giobbe altarpiece:

A vault...drawn in such excellent perspective that it seems as though a hole were broken in the wall.20

E. Hubala suggests that the architectural setting of the Venetian sacra conversazione is a combination of a traditional Venetian architectural form which he calls the "cuba" with new Renaissance form and perspective inspired by Masaccio. The Zanipolo altarpiece preserves more of the traditional Venetian aspect than the more progressive San Giobbe altarpiece.21

In his Zanipolo and San Giobbe altars Bellini has created his pictorial form on the basis of the works of Italian Renaissance painters and therein has allowed the old Venetian housing, the "cuba," to be renewed again in modern dress.22

Ursula Schlegel, in her study of Masaccio's Trinity fresco, adduces sources, important for the North Italian sacra conversazione, which fall outside the conventional tradition discussed in Chapter Three above. She suggests that Masaccio's illusionistic, Brunelleschian chapel is the prototype for the representation of monumentally conceived figures in a complete enclosed architectural space, adapted in funerary chapels and in sculpted tabernacles before adopted in the sacre conversazioni popular in the Venetian region (Figs. 41, 42).23 She sees Masaccio's scheme as ideal for the representation of a vision of divine beings within a specific, worldly setting, which in this case is identified as the Chapel of Golgotha in the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem. Her identification of a funerary iconography suggests a basis for the Venetian interest, in particular that of Bellini, in Masaccio's scheme, as discussed by Keydel.24 Furthermore, Schlegel correctly
characterizes Masaccio's *Trinity* scheme as a division of unified space into zones symbolizing the transient and the eternal, by means of the enclosing architecture and its frame which strictly define the transition from foreground to background.

It may be that in addition to the suitability of Masaccio's architectural setting to express a theme of personal salvation through immediacy to the viewer and the contiguity of depicted space with the real space of the viewer in the church while retaining a division of the space into symbolic zones, the architecture had a more precise form and meaning which were of interest in Venice. Jack Freiberg identifies the interior view of a vaulted space with subsidiary chambers as the ancient schema of Byzantine origin for depicting Solomon's Temple, adapted as an ideal sacred container for a Eucharistic subject (here the combined Throne of Grace and Crucifixion emphasizing the human incarnation and sacrifice of Christ) (Fig. 41). This scheme is closely followed in the San Giobbe altarpiece. Furthermore, he suggests that the plan of Masaccio's chapel may be an adaptation of the Byzantine Eucharistic sanctuary, consisting of a central space flanked by two small lateral chambers known as pastophoria which open into the altar area but not into the church itself. Perhaps the unique spatial effect of the forward projecting, plastically extended closed apse setting in Venetian *sacre conversazioni* was intended to approximate this effect of an enclosed altar area within the larger church space which is characteristic of Byzantine sanctuaries. Keydel observes of the San Giobbe altarpiece:

> With respect to the way in which it exists in the environment of the church, the altar ensemble at San Giobbe calls to mind the discrete, partial centres which occur within Byzantine architecture.

The reasons for the remarkable, but neglected, Venetian interest in
Byzantine architecture and visual art, and the more specific suitability of Masaccio's Eucharistic architecture to the San Giobbe altarpiece are discussed in Chapters Five and Six. The Venetian sensitivity to Byzantine spatial organization was not only a cultural heritage but a direct reflection of the strong Byzantine Greek component of daily life in fifteenth century Venice. An adaptation of Byzantine artistic schema would be intentional and coincidental with Venetian devotional and political interests.
NOTES

1. F. Zanotto, Pinacoteca Veneta, ossia raccolta dei migliori dipinti delle chiese di Venezia, 2 vol., Venice, 1858-1860. For Robertson's discussion see his Bellini, p. 59. The lost Bellini altarpiece has been replaced with one by a follower, F. Bissolo or an unknown follower of Marco Basaiti (Heinemann, Bellini, vol. 1, p. 303). Regarding vanishing point, see Robertson, Bellini, p. 65, n. 2.

2. F. Barbieri, Il Museo Civico di Vicenza, Dipinti e sculture del XIV al XV secolo, Venice, 1962, vol. 1, pp. 153-161; the Virgin enthroned with Saints John the Baptist, Bartholomew, Augustine, and Sebastian, tempera on canvas and panel, 4,60 x 2,40 m., signed, undated, painted for the choir of San Bartolomeo, Vicenza, above and behind the altar in a frame, after enlargement and reconstruction of choir in 1484.

3. L. Coletti, Cima da Conegliano, 2nd ed., Venice, 1960, colour plate VII, p. 77; panel, 2,02 x 3,45, dated 1493, commissioned by the canons of the Scuola dei Battuti (Cima made a donation by reducing the price and increasing the number of saints represented).

4. Ghiotto, Pignatti, Opera Completa, no. 183, p. 106; Venice, San Zaccaria, oil, 5,00 x 2,35 m., painted in memory of Pietro Cappello.

5. The closed apse or partially closed apse was the most popular setting for the Venetian sacra conversazione and was used occasionally for other subjects such as Carpaccio's Presentation in the Temple, Fig. 44, Marco Marziale's London Circumcision, 1500, Fig. 45 (M. Davies, The Earlier Italian Schools, London, 1951, no. 803, p. 267; canvas, 2,22 x 1,51, vault arches inscribed with Luke 11:29, donated by jurist and poet Tommaso Raimondi, d. 1510, to high altar S. Silvestro, Cremona) and Boccaccio Boccaccino's Annunciation, Fig. 46, in the Boncompagni collection, Rome (A. Venturi, North Italian Painting of the Quattrocento, New York, (1931), 1974, part II, pl. 27).

The vaulted baldacchino is less frequent, for example, Cima's Dragan altarpiece, Fig. 47, in the Accademia, Venice (Coletti, Cima, 1960, no. 42, p. 79).

The type of vaulting is varied, including cross, barrel, dome and combinations. The column or square pilaster supports are classical, almost always bearing Corinthian capitals, and often decorated with floral or vegetal motifs. Arches or entablatures extend forward to the picture plane and appear to be completed by the frame in those cases where the painting may still be viewed in its original frame, for example, Vivarini's Belluno altarpiece, Fig. 43 (frame not shown).
and Romanino's S. Giustina altarpiece in Padua, Fig. 42 (L. Grossato, Il Museo Civico di Padua, Dipinti e sculture dal XIV al XIX secolo, Venice, 1957, no. 165, pp. 71-76; oil on panel, 4,00 x 2,62, signed, original frame, 6,77 x 4,03, commissioned by Benedictine monks in 1513 for old choir of S. Giustina, Padua).

Recurrent features are the music-making angels (discussed above Chapter Two, and below, Chapter Six, pp. 120-121) and the mosaiced vault which refers, often explicitly, to the great mosaic vaults at the state church of San Marco, Cima's Virgin Enthroned with Saints, Fig. 48, Berlin, Staatliche Museen, from San Michele di Murano near Venice (Coletti, Cima, 1960, no. 39, p. 78; 1,35 x 2,06, signed, thought to be commissioned by Commisaria of Pietro di Benedetto Priuli in 1511 for Chapel of the Madonna, but Coletti dates before 1495), where the mosaics are taken from the Genesis cycle in the atrium of San Marco, and Marco Marziale's Circumcision, Fig. 44 (see above) and Enthroned Virgin with Saints, London, National Gallery, Fig. 49 (Davies, Earlier Italian Schools, 1951, no. 804, p. 268; panel, 2, 205 x 1,42 m., signed, 1507, from high altar of S. Gallo, Cremona, sentence on vaulting is Easter antiphon: (Regi)NA . CELI . LET(a)RE . AELVIA . O(?).

6. Robertson's discussion "The earlier work of Giovanni Bellini," JWCI 23 (1960):55. If we accept Crowe and Cavalcaselle's dating of Bellini's lost Zanipolo altarpiece (which they were able to observe in the original) before the Pesaro Coronation of the Virgin as Robertson does, and if we accept the dating of the Coronation to 1471-1474 as proposed in recent studies of its historical evidence (summarized by Ghiotto, Pignatti, Opera Completa, s.v. "Coronation of the Virgin, Pesaro") the Zanipolo altarpiece could precede Antonello's altarpiece by as much as five years.

7. See below this chapter, p. 65.

8. See p. 6, n. 12, Chapter One.


10. Pallucchini, Vivarini, 1961, no. 150, p. 119; panel, 1,21 x 1,21 m., signed, dated 1465.

11. Davies, Earlier Italian Schools, 1951, p. 38; panel, signed, after 1469.

12. L. Testi, La Storia della Pittura Veneziana, Part 1, Le Origini, Bergamo, 1909, pp. 225-226, pl. VII; Pallucchini, Pittura Veneziana del Trecento, 1964, fig. 548, pp. 177, 181; panel 1,24 x 0,50 m., dated 1372.

14. Wilde, "Pala di San Cassiano," 1929, p. 71: "...was aber die Aufmerksamkeit von der kirchlichrepräsentativen Bestimmung dieser Bildgattung etwas ablenkt."

15. Moschini-Marconi, Accademia, no. 36, p. 37; triptych, canvas, 3,38 x 4,80 m., signed and dated 1446.


17. Robertson, Bellini, pp. 5-6.

18. Robertson, "Earlier Work," 1960, pp. 57-58; idem., Bellini, pp. 61, 65-66; Hubala, Madonna Mit Kind, 1969, pp. 10-12, discusses the Florentine precedents for Bellini's monumental sacre conversazioni, but implies that Bellini had direct, unmediated contact with Florentine ideas.


20. Loc. cit.


22. Ibid., p. 12.


24. For Masaccio's Trinity as the Chapel of Golgotha, ibid., pp. 19-33, and Chapter Five, n. 66. Keydel sees sources for the Renaissance vocabulary of Bellini's sacre conversazioni at Zanipolo and San Giobbe in Venetian funerary architecture, primarily the Lombardi's burial chapel for Doge Moro in San Giobbe, c. 1470. See Chapter Five, p. 83 and n. 52.

25. S. Wilk, "Iconological Problems in the Sculpture of Tullio Lombardo," (Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1977), pp. 119-120 and J. Freiberg, "The 'Tabernaculum Dei': Masaccio and the Perspective Tabernacle Altarpiece," (M.A. thesis, New York University, 1974) p. 19. An example, later than the San Giobbe altarpiece, is the plan of the Bernabò Chapel in San Giovanni Crisostomo, Venice, after 1497, and the plan of the architectural setting of Tullio Lombardo's Coronation of the Virgin relief in the same chapel. Wilk defines the pastophoria as "the Eucharistic chapels on each side of the altar where the Eucharist is prepared and various liturgical equipment is kept."

26. Wilk notes the Byzantine inspired decoration of tramezzi and chancel barriers in late fifteenth century Venice, pp. 138-140. The idea of the tabernacle housing holy beings within the larger church space is of course seen in Donatello's high altar for the Santo, Padua.

CHAPTER FIVE

HISTORY OF THE SITE, AND DEVOTIONAL FUNCTION OF THE ALTARPIECE

Bellini's San Giobbe altarpiece is a key work in the development of the Venetian type of sacra conversazione altarpiece. As it will be argued in this chapter, it was most likely commissioned to fulfill a funerary function, to adorn the altar near the donor's burial place in the church, and to visually embody his hope of eternal life. Its illusionistic architectural setting is intimately connected with one of the first unified Renaissance interiors in Venice, which arose in a context of public relief, Franciscan piety, and ducal propaganda. The history of the comparatively young church of San Giobbe from its foundation in 1390 to its re-consecration in 1493, falls into three phases. Giovanni Contarini, a Venetian patrician, founded the hospital and then the church soon after the wars with Genoa, in a period of peace and expansion, as a vehicle of aristocratic charity ultimately under state jurisdiction. A vigorous period of growth commenced with the arrival of the Franciscan Order of Observants in the early 15th century. The church gained prestige and repute for sanctity, augmented by the occasional visits of the most powerful Mendicant preacher, St. Bernardin of Siena. The second phase in the life of the church, monastic community and associated houses of relief begins in the 1450's when Doge Cristoforo Moro undertook extensive benefaction of the foundation and cultivated its prestigious association with St. Bernardin whose famous prophecy had given
Moro's assumption of ducal office a kind of divine sanction. It was at this time, as a result of Moro's humanist interests, that the church received its Renaissance character. By transforming the high altar into a burial chapel, decorated with his ducal coat of arms, and dedicated to St. Bernardino, Doge Moro virtually appropriated the foundation of San Giobbe as a personal and state monument in a manner consistent with the processes of Venetian political and ecclesiastical tradition. Following the demise of the doge in 1471, the tradition of aristocratic patronage, as opposed to ducal, and the original importance and dedication of the church to San Giobbe were reaffirmed. It was then that the unknown donor commissioned Bellini's altarpiece and by the time of the completion of the rebuilding programmes initiated by Moro and the reconsecration of the church in 1493, it was in place over the altar of Job.

The church of San Giobbe is famous as one of the first examples of Tuscan inspired Renaissance architecture in Venice.\(^1\) The interior of the church is wide and lofty space, an open, aisle-less basilica, cross-vaulted, which culminates in the stately triumphal arch and hovering, light-filled cupola of the chancel (Fig. 2). The grey marble is set off against the warm, light colour of the walls and vaults, with brighter colour notes in the red stone of the pavement and tombslabs and the red and green stone in the altar antependia. The chancel, which is the burial chapel, dedicated to St. Bernardino of Siena, of the chief benefactor of the church and monastery Doge Cristoforo Moro (1462-1471), was probably complete before the San Giobbe altarpiece was started.\(^2\) Framed in marble columns and pediment, the altarpiece was the second on the right in the church, flanked by the first altar of the Foscari family, and the third altar of the Sanudo family. The three
altars and altarpiece frames are related in dimension and general format and form an impressive facade (Fig. 4). A series of Renaissance chapels project outwards from the north wall of the church opposite the three monumental altars. Of these the first from the entrance on the left, the Grimani chapel, and the second, the Martini chapel, may have been complete or at least under construction in the period of Bellini's altarpiece.³

The atmosphere of the church is sombre and shadowy due to the limited natural illumination admitted by the small, highly placed windows. Other than those of the chapels there are small circular windows, probably dating to the Renaissance period of the building, situated above the cornice level of the south wall. Each of the three altars has been placed beneath one of these but they provide no direct lighting. The entrance facade of the church has been remodelled and its two highly placed rectangular windows, which are now a major source of natural light for the interior, date from after the Renaissance period of building.⁴ However, in view of the conscious integration of Bellini's altarpiece with the church interior in other respects, the fall of light from the upper right in the painting was probably intended to coincide with the natural illumination of the church.

Phase One

The history of the foundation, benefaction and administration of the hospital, church and convent of San Giobbe makes it clear that this multiple establishment was primarily a vehicle of public relief, administered by the state and its lay citizens through a religious framework. Indeed the hospital⁵ was first to be established on the site and it was not until 12 years later, in 1390, that the oratory was associated with it. The founder was a member of the Venetian patriciate of whose public career little is
known, but that he was probably a direct descendant of Doge Jacopo Contarini (1275-1280) and was accepted into the Maggior Consiglio in 1354. He was revered as a pious man who, having made other similar endowments upon the city, entered the priesthood in his old age. In his last testament he left all his goods to the hospital and church and stipulated the daily celebration of Mass and a yearly celebration in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Contarini's dedication of the first oratory (small church) to Job, unprecedented in Venice, must have been in relation to the function of the hospital to alleviate the distress of the ill and deprived as Job's health and property were restored by God. As a model of Christian faith tried by worldly disaster and particularly by an illness whose symptoms resembled those of the plague, Job was a qualified intercessor with God for the poor and ill. Furthermore, as the prophet of the Resurrection ("For I know that my redeemer liveth...," Job 19:25) and a man before whom God chose to appear (Job 38:1) he was a saint who could offer great spiritual comfort and hope to the gravely ill and destitute.

The combined foundations were except for the vegetable gardens entirely dependent upon public donation for the acquisition of land and houses, the construction of new buildings, furnishing of the church, and provision for the daily needs of both the friars and the recoverati of the ospedale. This dependence meant state and lay control throughout the history of the site, especially in view of Venetian ecclesiastical independence from Rome. The major form of financial support seems to have been the legacy of the wealthy citizen administered by a body of Venetian citizens appointed by the deceased, known as a Commisaria. Pullan observes that the Procuratori of San Marco were involved in the administration of these
legacies, ensuring that all the charitable stipulations of the benefactor were adhered to. The jurisdiction of the state in most matters pertaining to the charitable community of San Giobbe seems to have been ultimate and indirectly exercised, except in decrees permitting the acquisition of land and the establishment of a confraternity (Appendix I, entry 4, 1389, and 1453). When papal jurisdiction was exercised, as it was in 1441 when two prominent Venetian clerics decided that the original oratory at San Giobbe must be preserved from demolition, it was customarily through the agency of delegated Venetian citizens.

The pious benefaction or legacy to a charitable religious institution such as San Giobbe was an important means of providing public relief for the city at a time when public commissions for such service had not yet come into existence. Although there was a growing awareness, prodded by the great Franciscan preachers of the fifteenth century, of the importance of well-being and moral rectitude among the populace for the success of the Venetian state in its struggles with the Turks, there was also a growing belief in the efficacy of acts of charity in gaining spiritual grace for the individual and divine favour for, and intervention in, the affairs of the state as a whole. Furthermore, the growing humanist movement propagated the belief that civic virtue could be exercised through wealth as much as through political or military service by means of privately financed public works.

In 1428 Lucia Dolfin, the daughter of Giovanni Contarini, who carried on her father's beneficence to the hospital of San Giobbe, entrusted the hospital and church to the care of a convent of Franciscan Observants (Appendix II, entry no. 8). The choice of this religious Order to care
for the medical and spiritual needs of the institution was suitable in a number of respects. First, the Observants were famous for their devotion to the ill, especially in time of plague. This alone rendered them almost essential to any community subject as Venice was to recurrent attacks of virulent disease. Secondly, the Observant preachers were active and effective promoters of charitable institutions. Pullan notes that the reorganization of poor relief from the middle of the fifteenth century in Italy was "closely linked with the activities of Observant Franciscan preachers," to their "direct if crude eloquence" in promoting charitable projects. Finally, the reputed sanctity and efficacious prayer of the Observants and their moral, pacifying influence on civic strife, made them popular among the people and gained the favour and co-operation of civic authorities. For these reasons material support was virtually guaranteed to any institution with which the Observants were associated.

Phase Two

The influence of the great Observant preacher St. Bernardin of Siena on Cristoforo Moro was a major factor in the initiation of the second phase of rebuilding and expansion of the church and convent of San Giobbe. The life and career of this saint exemplifies the beliefs and practices of the Franciscan Observants. He was famous for his extreme devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and for his care of plague victims. He spent 26 years as an itinerant Observant preacher, pursuing the "Ministry of the Word," drawing large crowds everywhere in Italy while he denounced luxury and civic feuding. After rising to Vicar General of the Order in 1437, he made tours of inspection to Observant convents to ensure adherence to the Rule of poverty, and is thought to have preached and lodged at the convent of San
Giobbe in 1443, the year before his death at Aquila. St. Bernardin's powerful influence on the populace led to his friendship with important political figures including the Venetians Gabriele Condulmer (Pope Eugenius IV) and Cristoforo Moro.

Before 1450 the combined foundations of San Giobbe were essentially the endowment of the Contarini family. The church was small, the convent and hospital poor and there was no important relic associated with the church. Nevertheless, it had established a reputation for the sanctity of its friars, and the high rank of visiting clerics and citizens. The church attracted crowds of worshippers. By 1434 the friars felt the need to greatly increase the capacity of the church and the first programme of rebuilding and enlargement probably began some time after 1441.

Moro's extensive benefaction to the church of San Giobbe was dedicated to St. Bernardin in remembrance of their friendship while Moro was capitan of Padua and of the saint's famous prediction of his future doge-ship. Moro's establishment of the saint's cult did enhance the prestige of the church and was probably an important factor in attracting the public donations on which the institution relied. What is striking is that here was an unprecedented opportunity due to the recent foundation of the church and its lack of relics or other sacred historic connections for a Venetian doge to virtually transform and elevate a sacred institution that was to be his site of burial and a testament to his charity. Moro was the first doge to be buried in San Giobbe and he chose the most prominent position, the capella maggiore, for his tomb. This location would have been impossible in the customary sites of ducal burial in Venice and is reminiscent of that of Cosimo de' Medici in San Lorenzo, Florence (d. 1464).
In 1451, shortly after the canonization of St. Bernardin (1450), Moro began the works in the church and convent which were financed and directed by him and continued after his death in 1471 in accordance with his last testament (Appendix II, entry 18). He undertook the rebuilding of the chancel with its two lateral chapels as his burial chapel dedicated to St. Bernardin, for which he obtained spiritual indulgences from the Pope. It was commissioned in the newest, most splendid Renaissance style, probably from Pietro Lombardo and his workshop. In 1470 the tomb was completed, a slab marking its position at the foot of the high altar, in the centre of the chancel dedicated to St. Bernardin, the triumphal entrance arch above decorated with the Moro arms and the ducal corno (Fig. 2).

Whether or not St. Bernardin actually did stay at the convent of San Giobbe in 1443, this sacred connection was claimed. To elevate the status of the church and to strengthen his personal connection with the saint, Moro strove diligently to promote the cult of St. Bernardin. In 1453 the Council of Ten passed the decree allowing the establishment of a confraternity at San Giobbe in honor of St. Bernardin who was made the second titular saint of the church beside Job.

When Moro was elected Doge in 1462, thereby fulfilling St. Bernardin's prediction, his personal connection with the saint acquired a new dimension of divine sanction not only of his personal ducal power but also of the state itself of which the Doge was the symbolic embodiment. In 1470 Doge Moro persuaded the Senate to accept St. Bernardin as one of the minor patron saints of the Venetian Republic, with San Teodoro and San Magno, establishing his cult as an annual Venetian celebration. He thus obtained official recognition of the importance of his patron saint in
Venice, at the same time strengthening the connection of the church of San Giobbe with the state. This interest in making the church a state monument may lie behind Moro's attempt to endow the church with the disputed relic of St. Luke the Evangelist in a manner which recalls the legendary foundation of the state and ducal church of Venice as the shrine of the Evangelist Mark. The relic, which is said to have been transported in grand ducal procession from the galley which brought it from Bosnia, was declared legitimate by Cardinal Bessarion himself, although the judgement was later waived (Appendix II, entry 16). The importance of St. Luke to Moro's concept of the church is attested to by the prominence of his depiction, pendant with that of St. Mark, in a roundel on the right pillar of the triumphal arch entrance to Moro's chapel and by the dedication of the first chapel on the left in the church to St. Luke. The message of Moro's chapel and his cultivation of sacred associations for the church seems to be the identification of ducal and state power.

The concept of charity and the salvation of the soul is the basis of patronage at San Giobbe and Moro's belief in the efficacy of charitable works in obtaining grace is expressed in his testament. The testament repeatedly stipulates prayers and divine offices to be recited for "mea anima." Clearly he expected the friars who were benefiting so greatly from his largesse to labour on his behalf with God. It is possible that he purchased a "Letter of Fraternity" for he requested his body to be barefoot and clothed in Franciscan habit for burial. The rebuilt and enlarged church, hospital and convent form an enduring visual testament at the site of Moro's burial to his Christian charity as the amor dei and amor proximi figures on the tomb of Doge Nicolas Tron testify to the charity of Moro's successor.
Moro was strongly influenced by the growing humanist movement in Venice. Sheard notes that the inspiration for his funeral chapel seems to derive from Florence rather than the native Venetian traditions of tomb monuments, possibly accounting for Marin Sanuto's apparent inability to recognize the Moro chapel as a tomb monument. The similarity of the burial site to that of Cosimo de' Medici in Florence, San Lorenzo, has been noted. Perhaps Moro's more basic motive of patronage has a humanist aspect, a demonstration of civic virtues such as "liberality," "magnificence," and "magnanimity" promulgated by the humanist apologist Giovanni Caldiera in the first of his trilogy of moral philosophical treatises, De Virtutibus, written in 1464 and dedicated to Doge Moro who is praised throughout the body of the work.

Moro may have intended to cultivate a commemorative image of himself in the traditional ducal role of "protector of religion and justice" possibly to overcome a poor contemporary reputation which is reflected in the remarks of Venetian historians Domenico Malipiero and Marin Sanudo, and in the assassination attempt of 1470. Malipiero and Sanudo present a less than flattering picture of an unprepossessing figure, short in stature, cross-eyed, who employed a flattering, devious style of diplomacy, was deceitful, vindictive and avaricious and who indulged a love of pomp. Moro's patronage at San Giobbe and his funeral chapel in particular do seem to express self-glorification and the primacy of ducal power. In the latter half of the fifteenth century increasing power of the doge, which culminated in the Imperial stance of Agostino Barbarigo (1468-1501), caused an opposing reaction among the aristocratic ruling class. who by ancient constitutional definition were the major source of political power in
Venice.\(^{38}\) It is significant, for example, that in 1471, the year of Moro's demise, the display of stemme with the ducal corno outside the Ducal Palace was prohibited (Appendix II).\(^{39}\) Perhaps after Moro's death the threat of a ducal, or at least dynastic control of San Giobbe, provoked a reassertion of the original tradition of patrician as opposed to ducal patronage and of the primacy of the titular saint Job over St. Bernardin.\(^{40}\)

Phase Three

The commission of an altarpiece for the altar of Job falls into the third phase of the history of the church. The undated painting was executed in the mid-1480's after Pietro Lombardo and his workshop had completed Moro's chapel and either during or after construction of the Tuscan style Martini Chapel opposite.\(^{41}\) Not much is known of the third building phase which evidently ended with the reconsecration of the church in 1493 (Appendix II, entry 24). There is no documentation of the original site of the altar, which appears to have been dismantled and reassembled at some time.\(^{42}\) Beyond the possible allusion in Sabellico's 1493 notice to its location on one side of the church\(^{43}\) the contemporary notices do not directly indicate the site of the altar. The order in which Sansovino (1581) describes the three altars of the Foscari family, of Job, and of the Sanudo family corresponds with the present sequence.\(^{44}\) It seems most likely that the frame was constructed first by the Lombardi.\(^{45}\) If the position of Bellini's altarpiece is original, it is significant as the first use of the right, "south" wall which had only recently been completed, blocking the pre-existing Gothic windows.\(^{46}\) It initiates a series of wall decorations, most importantly the two flanking altars with altarpieces by Carpaccio and Basaiti dating after
1500 which correspond generally to the high, stone arched format of the Job altarpiece frame (Fig. 4). The illusionistic correspondence of the painted architecture to that of the frame has the effect of creating a full sized chapel, corresponding to the series of real chapels on the opposite, "north" wall. The Carpaccio altarpiece imitates this illusionistic effect, although its painted architecture does not follow that of the frame so perfectly (Fig. 45). The Basaiti altar appears to open outwards onto a landscape.

The only clue to the identity of the donor of the altarpiece is the coat of arms bearing a bridled horse rampant which is repeated on the two bases of the framing architecture of the painting (Fig. 5). There is a tomb slab in the pavement of the church at the foot of the steps to the altar. It is possible that it belonged to the family of the donor, although it now bears the name Costantino Bellotto, and the date 1728 (Appendix II, entry 26). E. A. Cicogna suggests that it could have been taken over by another family at a later date. That the tomb of a private donor could have been associated with the San Giobbe altarpiece is reinforced by the correspondence of family tomb slabs to the coats of arms which appear in the same location on the frames of the two flanking altarpieces.

It is possible that the altarpiece, altar and tomb slab form a single funerary complex. The pictorial space of the altarpiece creates the strong illusion of a full size chapel on the south wall of the church interior (Fig. 37, and Chapter Two). The altarpiece frame, altar and steps form an architectural and decorative unit which is continued by the architectural and decorative unit which is continued by the architectural construction, and decoration of the painted chapel. As observed in Chapter Two, the visual effect created by the altarpiece in its framing unit is of a real
chapel space projecting forward from the wall into the interior of the church. The correspondences of the architectural forms, the spatial perspective, and the lighting with the altarpiece frame, the Tuscan Renaissance style of the Church, the viewpoint of the spectator, and the natural illumination of the Church interior, create the illusion of a real chapel space, coextensive in time and place with that of the viewer standing before it. The illusionistic spatial extension of the chapel includes by implication the tomb of the donor in the pavement before the altar. In other words, the viewer's axis of sight includes the tomb slab, altar, and chapel space of the altarpiece, a vestibule area entered by a triumphal arch in which saints intercede in anticipation of the Last Judgement before the enthronement of Christ and Mary in the apse, as can be seen in diagram combining the real plan of the altar with the fictive plan of the pictorial space (Fig. 9).

The illusionistic chapel created by the Job altar ensemble may be intended to create the equivalent, reduced in actual area, of a burial chapel. In his discussion of the commission and funerary function of Botticelli's Uffizi Adoration of the Magi in S. Maria Novella, Florence, Rab Hatfield implies that the fifteenth century definition of a burial chapel is functional rather than architectural:

Any arrangement in which altar and tomb were combined might be called a chapel. Antonello's San Cassiano sacra conversazione painted for the patrician Pietro Bon may have had a funerary or at least commemorative function. Keydel has noted the relationship of the architecture of the San Giobbe altarpiece and its frame to the architecture of the triumphal archway to Moro's burial chapel, and suggests there may be a "connection between the
environment of burial chapels and the setting of a Sacra Conversazione (compare Figs. 2, 3 and 17). Moro's chapel is an ensemble of altarpiece dedicated to his patron saint, altar, and tomb, within a Renaissance architectural setting carrying triumphal meaning.

Other sacra conversazione altarpieces by Bellini, of differing formats, had funerary functions to which the San Giobbe altarpiece may be similar. The contemporary votive painting, dated 1488, of Doge Agostino Barbarigo being presented by St. Mark to the Virgin and Christ Child, consisting of full length figures in a loggia against a landscape vista (Fig. 53), was donated to the high altar of S. Maria degli Angeli, Murano, with the stipulation that the sisters of the convent were to pray for Barbarigo's soul and the souls of all his family who had passed from this life. The triptych of the Virgin Enthroned with Saints at the Frari, Venice, also dated 1488, is a sacra conversazione notwithstanding the archaic form of framing (Fig. 39). It is placed on an altar over the tomb slab of Franceschina Tron Pesaro, in whose memory her husband and sons had endowed the altarpiece and chapel of the Frari sacristy. Invocation of Mary as the "Sure Gate of Heaven" in the vault inscription expresses the hope of salvation for Franceschina and her male relatives who are represented in the altarpiece by their onomastic saints. A second sacra conversazione painted by Bellini in 1507 for Giacomo Dolphin's chapel in San Francesco della Vigna, Venice, was also placed on an altar over the donor's tomb, in accordance with the stipulations of his testament (Fig. 54).

It may be that Florentine tradition, whose influence is evident both in the Lombardesque architecture and decoration at San Giobbe, in the notably Tuscan Martini chapel and in the underlying concept of Moro's burial chapel,
provides a precedent for Bellini's funerary ensemble in Masaccio's germinal Trinity fresco (Fig. 38). The presence of the two donors and of the skeleton and inscription below indicate the funerary theme of the fresco. It is possible that the architectural space selected for this theme might have funerary meaning. Recent studies have proposed the funerary function of the fresco in association with a detached altar and a tomb slab. Although we lack firm documentation of the existence of this ensemble, it would have conformed to a tradition of Florentine tomb monuments. It seems possible that not only the architectural forms of Masaccio's Trinity might carry meaning suitable to a funerary context, but that it was in fact part of a funerary complex that could have been a precedent for Bellini's altarpiece.

It can be argued that Bellini's altarpiece has an eminently funerary theme, that of the Resurrection mystery, which is expressed in the two doctrines of the Incarnation of Christ and of the transubstantiation of the Eucharist into his real body. According to Schiller:

Western theology sees an extremely close connection between Incarnation and the doctrine of redemption...From the late twelfth century onwards these two closely linked articles of faith--the Incarnation of God and Redemption of man through Christ's expiatory death--came increasingly conspicuously to occupy a prominent position in both theology and art.

From the time that the Annunciation to Mary was associated with the moment of Christ's Incarnation, it was identified with the most important date in Christian history, the beginning of God's new covenant with mankind. The Annunciation/Incarnation and the Resurrection form the central doctrine of the Christian Church. The transubstantiation doctrine, which was still under discussion in the fifteenth century, is considered to be the mysterious, actual re-enactment of the Incarnation, emphasizing the living and efficacious presence of Christ in the Eucharist.
The most important exponent of this theme is the Christ Child himself, whose representation combines allusions to the Incarnation, Passion and Resurrection. Small, naked, pathetic, he is enveloped by the massive draperies of Mary in whose womb he received mortal life; pointing to his future wound, Christ the Child is the sacrifice offered by the Hodegetria, the sacrifice which is celebrated in the Mass, and he is thus the equivalent to the Host, the holy relic of the consecrated altar. He is thus the equivalent to the Host, the holy relic of the consecrated altar. His erectness, animation and transfigured expression evoke the triumph of Resurrection.

The themes which converge in the Christ Child are expressed in other elements of the painting. The depiction of Mary reinforces the Incarnation theme. Her enthronement in an apse is an ancient symbol of the Incarnation which is found in early Christian and Byzantine art. The Annunciation reference of the inscriptions and of the Virgin's gesture are more explicit indications. The gesture of Mary's left hand is unprecedented and surprisingly close in effect to a gesture of blessing (Fig. 57). It is a response to the fall of brilliant light, an acknowledgement of Job's prayer and a reference to the Annunciation and Incarnation. The gesture is similar to that of an Annunciatory type found in Venetian sculpture (compare Figs. 57, 58) and also appears in Florentine Annunciations, such as the Uffizi Annunciation, which may have been painted by Leonardo in the early 1470's (Fig. 59). The description by a mendicant preacher of the fifteenth century, Fra Roberto Caracciolo of the conception as the fifth emotional state, "meritatio,"

when the Virgin Mary conceived Christ her soul rose to such lofty and sublime contemplation of the action and sweetness of divine things that, in the presence of the beatific vision, she passed beyond the experience of every other created being... Probably, in her profound humility, she raised her eyes to heaven and then lowered them.
is remarkably close to the effect of Bellini's Mary. The importance of
the Annunciation theme in Venetian tomb iconography is noted by Sheard, who
observes that

The Annunciation is one of the oldest and most pervasive
themes of Venetian tomb sculpture.\textsuperscript{76}

As the \textit{Sedes Sapientiae}, the throne of Mary refers to the Logos,
made incarnate in Christ, and to the majesty of the resurrected Redeemer.\textsuperscript{77}
However, its strongest references in Bellini's altarpiece appear to be to the
Eucharistic aspect of Christ. In Christological iconography, both
literary, and visual, "altar," "tomb," and "throne" are virtually synonymous
symbols of Christ's death, resurrection and living, continuing presence in
the Eucharist.\textsuperscript{78} In Christian belief the altar is the holiest place on
earth because it receives the body of Christ in the Eucharist, and is the
site of God's real presence and communion with the worshipper.\textsuperscript{79} The most
basic meaning of the altar, one which is connected with its historic origins,
is that of burial, and the altar, aside from its frequent function of housing
saint relics, was seen as the tomb of Christ and the site of his Resurrection.
Furthermore devotion to the consecrated Host as the Corpus, and its display
on the altar, lead to reverence of the altar as the "throne of the Royal
Body" and in Greek metaphor "God's throne and mercy seat."\textsuperscript{80} In religious
iconography the image of the Virgin holding the Christ Child is an analogue
of the appearance of the Host on the altar.\textsuperscript{81} Two examples of this conflated
imagery are Masaccio's 1426 Pisa polyptych where the strigilations on the
base of Mary's throne recall antique sarcophagi (Fig. 62) and Mantegna's
Dead Christ, at Copenhagen, where Christ's tomb assumes the aspect of a
throne.\textsuperscript{82} In Bellini's own oeuvre there is an example of a throne bearing
the Eucharistic imagery of the altar: in the Uffizi \textit{Sacred Allegory} Mary's
The throne is decorated by grapes hanging from a cornucopia above a chalice-like object. Eucharistic imagery may be inspired by decoration of antique altars, as can be seen in sacra conversazione altarpieces by Bellini's follower, Cima da Conegliano (Fig. 48). It may be that Cima was influenced by a similar use of antique motifs in Bellini's San Giobbe altarpiece, such as the relief decoration of floral stems, palmettes and cornucopia. The floral stems on the sides of the throne include heads of wheat, a Eucharistic symbol. The cornucopia is a familiar symbol of Charity, of which Christ's sacrifice is the divine expression.

That the throne represents the altar bearing Christ as the Host is emphasized by the striking motif of disc and cross which surmounts it. The fall of pictorial light silhouettes the marble disc and gold cross against the dark shadows of the apse and delicately applied touches of real gold caught by the natural light further accentuate them. Their meaning goes beyond that of the familiar cross and orb of Christ's dominion. The disc is strongly reminiscent of a liturgical vessel, and may be inspired by the antique sacrificial vessel, the patera, a motif which appears frequently on antique altars with its companion vessel the ewer. Light and shade define its shallow saucer-like depression. Although of marble, not the usual metal, it recalls the concentric lobed design of the Eucharistic paten, the vessel of the Host. It may be intended to represent the elevated Host itself, the circular wafer which at the moment of elevation and consecration was believed to become the real body of Christ and which in the fifteenth century was the object of the fervent cult of the Corpus Christi.

The crucifix is the central compositional and iconographical point.
of the altarpiece, located at the intersection of the central vertical and horizontal axes of the painting. It is liturgical also in the sense that the crucifix is the principal ornament of the altar and it must be visible to all who celebrate the Mass.87

The cross has a distinctive form which can be identified as the Byzantine "foliate cross" of salvation which is a characteristic decoration of Byzantine church doors in both Byzantium and Italy (Fig. 63). M. Fraser's recent study of the foliate cross in the decoration of the central and south atrium doors of San Marco demonstrates its meaning of intercession and salvation.88 In conjunction with the eucharistic disc, it stresses the living power of the Host, the eternally living body of Christ and the reality of salvation.89

The architectural space of the altarpiece is a kind of sacred space, a shrine to house the mystery of the Eucharist.90 It parallels the containing function of Mary who is the pre-eminent shrine or tabernacle of the Incarnate Christ.91 The architecture of the San Giobbe altarpiece, in its relationship to that of Masaccio's Trinity, may carry the Eucharistic meaning which Freiberg has identified in his study of the influence of Masaccio's fresco on the sacrament tabernacle in Italian sculpture92 in which he identifies the architectural form of a central vaulted chamber with two lateral chambers as the tabernaculum dei, an ideal container for the Incarnate God. The use of perspective construction, furthermore,

in its paradoxical capacity to transform images into intangible realities, offers a visual analogue to the miracle of transubstantiation.93

Because of the equivalence of the architectural and human "enclosures" as sacred containers of the Incarnate Christ Masaccio's architectural form is suitable not only to sacrament tabernacles, but also to large scale
altarpieces with a Eucharistic theme, such as the Annunciation and the Enthroned Virgin and Saints. An example of the former is the Annunciation by a Bellini follower, Boccaccio Boccaccino whose architecture recalls that developed by Bellini in his sacre conversazioni (Fig. 46). In the San Giobbe altarpiece the area of the painting in which Eucharistic iconography has been identified forms a rectangular unit of the holy beings completely enclosed by the throne, surmounted by a liturgical disc and cross. If the division of zones in the altarpiece is compared with that of a sacrament tabernacle such as the 1461 tabernacle by Desiderio da Settignano in San Lorenzo, Florence (Fig. 41), the rectangular unit corresponds to the tabernacle door behind which is stored the consecrated Host. The disc and cross correspond with a zone of the tabernacle frequently reserved for the depiction of the Host and chalice, as in Bernardo Rossellino's tabernacle for S. Egidio, Florence, 1450.

The theme of Resurrection in the sense of individual salvation is linked to that of the Eucharist by the belief in the living, miracle power of Christ's relic, the Host. The theme of Resurrection is emphasized by the presence of the prophet of the Resurrection, Job (Fig. 8) who indeed appears to be transfixed by the sight of the resurrected Christ before him. Furthermore, in biblical commentary and popular devotion Job was regarded as an Old Testament type foreshadowing the suffering Christ of the Passion.

The fifteenth century cult of Mary and Franciscan devotion in particular accorded her an exalted position as supreme mediator on the basis of her redemptive role at the Annunciation. The Franciscans believed in the efficacy of the individual will and its own action in obtaining merit and the forgiveness of sin. Mary was both a model for the spiritual life that
earned merit, and an intercessor with God on behalf of the individual. St. Bernardin of Siena, considered by Graef to be the author of the worst mariolatrous exaggerations, believed that the final sanctification of Mary took place at the Annunciation and that her consent merited her all grace, world dominion, and perfect knowledge, and a position superior in some respects to that of Christ. The Annunciate gesture of Bellini's San Giobbe Virgin suggests that moment, "meritatio," in which knowing consent to both the Incarnation and sacrifice of her son earned her the position of co-redemp-tress. The importance of Mary in personal salvation is indicated by metaphors of her as the sole portal to heaven, mentioned above, for example, the "Sure gate of heaven" invocation in the vault inscription of Bellini's Frari triptych.

The invocation of intercession is the major purpose of the donation of the altarpiece and the function of its iconography. There appear to be two aspects to the donation: public and private. The dedication of an altar to Job with an altarpiece in which he is given an unusually prominent position in strong compositional and psychological connection with the Christ Child and Mary stresses his importance as the titular saint of the church and his power to intercede with Christ, through the Virgin, on behalf of the hospital. He and to a greater degree, St. Sebastian, represent an invocation against the plague which frequently struck Venice, and of which there was a severe outbreak in 1485, close to the date of the altarpiece. The public aspect of the donation is then to honour the titular saint of the hospital and church and to invoke the intercession of both saints with the Virgin concerning public welfare. The private aspect of the donation, the personal salvation of the donor, is traditionally represented by a patron
saint. The prominent position of St. Francis in the altarpiece, his direct confrontation with the viewer, the downward gesture of his right hand, and his representation as the Alter Christus, in addition to the popular belief in his efficacy as an intercessor, suggest that he of the six saints is most likely to represent the donor.\textsuperscript{104} In her study of the genesis of the \textit{sacra conversazione} type in the Trecento, Goffen suggests that its theme, originating in the context of Mendicant devotion, is intercession. The San Giobbe altarpiece, reunited with its frame, perfectly realizes the requirement of the \textit{sacra conversazione} to create a sacred space that extends forward to include the worshipper, and the deceased who awaits Last Judgement.

The Eucharistic iconography of the Madonna's enthronement and of the \textit{tabernaculum dei} architecture express the funerary theme of Resurrection. The \textit{sacra conversazione} format carries the idea of intercession. The donation of the altarpiece has a public aspect in its homage of the titular saint and its invocation for intercession against the plague. In the context of a funerary ensemble, plausible yet conjectural, of altarpiece, altar and tomb, and under the possible sponsorship of St. Francis or another of the six saints, there may be a private aspect of personal salvation in the commission of the altarpiece.
NOTES


2. Ibid., pp. 190-194.


Umberto Franzoi, Le Chiese di Venezia, Venice, 1976, p. 110, suggests that the asymmetrical design of the church may be due to the cloister wing once situated against the south wall which precluded the extension of chapels on that side of the church.


5. The words "ospizio" and "ospedale" are used interchangeably, see entries 3 and 6, Appendix II. Giuseppe Boerio, Dizionario del dialetto veneziano, 2 ed., Venice, 1856, lists "ospizio" and "ospitale" as synonyms: "Place where strangers are lodged without payment or which gives shelter to the poor for charity."


7. Ibid., p. 755, for extracts of the will of Giovanni Contarini, and Appendix II, entry 6.

8. Tramontin, CULTO DEI SANTI, 1965, p. 166: "Il culto di codesto santo a Venezia figura tra i più recenti dei vecchio testamentari, documentato il 21 dicembre 1389..." The cult of Job in Venice does not seem to be linked with the Eastern Church, loc. cit. See also Appendix II, entry 4.

Perhaps the choice of Job reflects the spiritual ideal of poverty and renunciation of the material world, for which Giovanni Contarini himself was revered. For example, Beato Giovanni dalle Celle of Florence counselled Colombini of Siena and his supporters that poverty is the only way to salvation, in the words of the Gospels, Job and Seneca,"


Tramontin suggests that the Venetian saying "povero giopo" refers to the impoverished circumstances of the hospital of San Giobbe and that this is the source of the Venetian place name "s. Agiopo," Tramontin, loc. cit. See Chapter Two, note 37.

9. Tramontin, loc. cit. The late Medieval view of Job is discussed further below, p. 90, n. 98.


It is interesting that Cristoforo Moro was a procurator of San Giobbe and involved in the administration of Elisabetta Bragadin's donation of land to the church (Appendix II, entry 13; Cicogna, Inscrizioni, vol. 6, part 1, p. 533).

12. See Appendix II, entry 10. The Venetian Pope Eugenius IV appointed San Lorenzo Giustiniani, Bishop of Castello, Tommaso Tommasini, Bishop of Feltre, and Fantino Dandolo, Protonotario Apostolico, the matter being decided in the absence of Tommasini (Flaminio Corner, Notizie Storiche delle Chiese e Monasteri de Venezia, e di Torcello, Padua, 1758, p. 285).

13. Pullan, Rich and Poor, 1971, p. 219. The first permanent magistracy in charge of public health was set up in 1486, possibly in response to the outbreak of plague in the previous year. In the Cinquecento there were at least 40 small, independent hospitals of Medieval origin in Venice (ibid., p. 207). The hospital of San Giobbe was one of the larger, more important of these institutions.

14. Ibid., p. 213. In relation to charitable donations made in Venice during the Turkish Wars of the 1470's Pullan remarks: "The need to earn divine favour, which might bring success in this holy war, inspired the city to good works: a state, like an individual person, could collectively acquire merit in the sight of God," (see note 15 below).

15. Ibid., p. 214 and note 50 cites the declaration of principle appearing in a decree of the Maggior Consiglio recommending financial support of
hospitals, dated March 12, 1503:

The chief and most salutary means of obtaining divine favour for a state and republic, just as for private persons, is the maintenance of the poor, in whom the person of our Lord Jesus Christ is represented, and hence the chief ornament of every most noble city is, and always has been some excellent hospital for feeding the poor.

16. The Frati Minori Osservanti were a branch of the Franciscan Order which practised strict observance of St. Francis' Rule of Poverty (J. R. Moorman, A History of the Franciscan Order, Oxford, 1968, p. 375). The Observants were experiencing rapid growth during the fifteenth century due to their reputation for sanctity, their devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and to the powerful influence of their great itinerant preachers (ibid., p. 373). An indication of this growth is the increase in convents of 35 in 1416 to 230 in 1444 (death of St. Bernardin).


18. The Observants were known for their fervent devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary as supreme Mediatrix.

19. Moorman, op. cit., 1968, pp. 517-518, "the sermon became an event of great importance in city life." City councils paid large sums for visits by preaching friars, to promote civic peace. Popes and civic leaders attempted to harness the power of the preachers to promote their political interests.

20. Large numbers of gifts, legacies were made to the Observants in the fifteenth century: "...people on the whole believed that they could help them. Nor was this confined to the ignorant and poor, but included people of substance and many of the better educated laymen in the latter part of the fifteenth century" (ibid., p. 516). A common practise was for the benefactor to receive a "Letter of Fraternity": "For a sum of money, left normally to a third party to administer on behalf of the friars, a layman or laywoman could acquire the privilege of being buried in the Franciscan habit and of being prayed for by the friars," (ibid., p. 120).


22. Cicogna, Inscrizioni, vol. 6, part 1, pp. 574-575, 583 and n. 2, St. Bernardin's prediction of Moro's dogeship probably took place in 1442 when Moro was capitano of Padua (p. 583, n. 2) and became a well-known legend. St. Bernardin and Moro had established a friendship and one day the saint told the capitano that he would be doge after the death of Francesco Foscari. Moro maintained his faith in the prediction when Pasquale Malipiero became doge, since Foscari had been deposed and was still living. When the prediction was fulfilled in 1464 after the death of Malipiero, Moro's faith in and devotion to St. Bernardin
increased. Moro commemorated the prediction, which was in effect a divine sanction of his dogeship, with a painting in which the saint shows a ducal crown to Moro, with the words "ECCE CORONABERIS," "Behold, you will be crowned." The painting was still in the monastery of San Giobbe in 1744. The artist and present location are unknown.

23. The prohibition of personal monuments in Venice led to the erection of magnificent funerary monuments often with a commitment to contribute to the construction, furnishing, or decoration of the church or cloister. Monuments of personal commemoration were created under the aegis of religious benefaction.

24. Paatz, *Kirchen von Florenz*, vol. 2, p. 495, and notes 178-179. The son of Cosimo de' Medici (died 1464) Piero de' Medici, commissioned a tomb slab from Verrocchio in 1465-1467, directly beneath the cupola over the crossing and before the high altar, sealing a shaft to the crypt below, in which the remains of Cosimo were interred. Like Moro, Cosimo is buried in the most prominent position of a church which was rebuilt by his family. (See also G. Passavant, *Verrocchio: Sculpture, Paintings and Drawings*, London, 1969, pp. 170-71 and C. Seymour, *The Sculpture of Verrocchio*, Greenwich, Connecticut, 1971, p. 161).


27. Ibid., p. 530 and inscription 109, p. 705. Cicogna, op. cit., p. 724, reproduces a history of the building of the church of San Giobbe. It reports that Moro wished to change the title of the church and that it should be called San Bernardino, and that he removed the altarpiece, which had been that of the old church, from the high altar of the new church, and put one of St. Bernardin in its place. His insistence that the friars should beg in the name of St. Bernardin appears to have met resistance, and the friars returned to mendicatio in the name of Job who had had his own reputation in the old church.


Cicogna, *Inscrizioni*, vol. 6, part 1, p. 534. Cicogna records that the fifteenth century wooden chest decorated on the front with relief figures of St. Luke between two winged lions of St. Mark, situated on the altar of the Sacristy chapel, contains the remains of the alleged relic of St. Luke. Finotto, *San Giobbe*, 1971, however, identifies the evangelical symbols as the winged ox of St. Luke. The importance of St. Luke to the fame of San Giobbe is indicated by Sabellico's notice (discussed above, p. 2 ) which begins: "ad Iob fundamenta per oram ducunt . hic Lucae conditorium" (cited by Cicogna, op. cit., p. 531).
30. Ibid., Document 5, pp. 728-732.

31. Ibid., p. 728, and see note 20 above. This request was made also by Cosimo de' Medici for his burial in San Lorenzo, Florence, a Franciscan church (G. H. Gombrich, "The Early Medici as Patrons of Art," Norm and Form: Studies in the Art of the Renaissance, London, 1966, pp. 49 ff.).


33. W. Sheard, "The Tomb of Doge Andrea Vendramin in Venice by Tullio Lombardo," (Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale University, 1971), p. 195, n. 8 (p. 425): "in close touch with current humanist thinking Moro had planned the triumphal arch and Capella Maggiore as his mausoleum, with only a simple tomb slab." See also Keydel, "Altarpieces," pp. 77-79, n. 3, p. 239. Sheard continues: "Moro's scheme for S. Gobbe differed dramatically from the typical Venetian program of doges' monuments, and more closely resembled the abstract glorification and concentration upon only a few images which had arisen as a hallmark of humanist funerary art with the Bruni and Marsuppini tombs in Florence." In her article "Sanudo's List of Notable Things in Venetian Churches and the Date of the Vendramin Tomb," Yale Italian Studies 1 (1977):233, Sheard gives this as the reason for Sanudo's failure to mention Moro's tomb in his otherwise complete list of ducal tomb monuments of the fifteenth century.

34. M. L. King, "Personal, Domestic, and Republican Values in the Moral Philosophy of Giovanni Caldiera," RQ 28 (1975):547, n. 35, 568, n. 88. The virtue of "magnificence" for example is possessed by the wealthy patrician whose splendor appears "in the construction of homes, fortresses and cities, which are intended to endure perpetually; and also similarly in the building of churches, in which divine offices (are to be performed) with the greatest devotion."

35. Demus, San Marco, 1960, p. 50. A medallion minted in the dogeship of Moro bears a profile head of Moro on the obverse and on the reverse, within a garland of flowers, "RELIGIONIS ET JUSTICIAE CULTOR," (Cicogna, Inscrizioni, vol. 6, part 1, p. 584). This is reflected in Cicogna's praise of Moro's "pietà verso la patria e verso la religione," (ibid., p. 578). The principle is personified by the two "amor" figures of the Tron tomb.

36. Ibid., p. 579, cites D. Malipiero, Gli Annali, who reports that a man was executed after plotting against the doge and having said: "Vegnimo diese a consejo domenega che vien et le corazzine sotto le veste a amazzemoli, comenzando da questo becco de Christofol Moro."


40. It was not until 100 year later that the second and last ducal burial took place in San Giobbe (Pietro Loredan, 1567-1570) Cicogna, op. cit., inscription no. 57, p. 639.

The reinstatement of Job may be reflected in the statement in the 1501 history of San Giobbe (see no. 27 above) that upon Moro's death the friars returned to mendicance in the name of Job alone "qual havevano havuto la reputation sua nella chiesa vecchia."

41. Appendix I for date of painting; note 3 this chapter for Martini chapel.

42. Personal observation, May 1978.

43. Sabellio, *De Venetae Urbis Situ*, 1493: "in parte aedis."

44. Sansovino, *Venetia* (1581) 1663, pp. 155-156.


46. Ibid., vol. 1, p. 191 and fig. 84.

47. The *stemma* consists of a shield bearing a rearing horse, bridled, with short tail (see also Cicogna, *Inscrizioni*, vol. 6, part 1, p. 563). I was unable to see the tail or sign of any other device on the shield (personal observation, May 1978). Cicogna dismisses identification with the house of Cavalli, in whose *stemma* the horse has a long tail and is crossed by a band bearing three stars (Casimiro Freschot, *La Nobiltà Veneta...,* Venice, 1707, Ristampa, Bologna, 1970, p. 287). See the prominent depiction of the Cavalli arms in an Altichiero fresco at Verona of Members of the Cavalli family being presented to the Virgin Mary illustrated in Palluchini, *Trecento*, 1964, fig. 456, p. 149. Cicogna also rules out the Ronsoni family, on whose *stemma* the horse stands on four feet and has a long tail. The unusual motif of the dolphin which appears in the capitals, observed by Hubala, op. cit., pp. 10-12, and which he suggests might be introduced to
Venice by a Florentine patron, might indicate the Dolfin family, related to the founder of San Giobbe and important patrons of the church in the fifteenth century.

Cicogna records the inscription of Constantino Bellotto, 1728, which was at one time visible "sul pavimento appiedi de'gradini dell'altare di S. Giobbe." At a later date the family of Bellotto could have taken over the tomb belonging to the family whose coat of arms appears on the altar frame and who probably commissioned the altarpiece by Bellini (Cicogna, op. cit., p. 563.)

48. Ibid., inscription no. 13, p. 561, and no. 15, p. 563.

49. See Chapter Two, note 60.


51. Sheard, "Marin Sanudo's List," 1977, p. 266, "Another interesting aspect of Sanudo's reference to Antonello's pala is its calling attention to a funerary, or at least commemorating function, providing an association of the Sacra Conversazione type with sepulchral functioning which perhaps deserves exploration."

52. Keydel, "Altarpieces," pp. 223-224, believes that both the SS. Giovanni e Paolo and the San Giobbe altarpieces' architectural settings may incorporate funerary vocabulary derived from Moro's chapel at San Giobbe, San Michele in Isola, the Marsuppini tomb in Florence, and possibly the Cardinal Portugal Chapel in San Miniato, Florence, via the Tuscan style Martini Chapel opposite Bellini's altarpiece in San Giobbe. The relation of the sacra conversazione setting to the realm created in a funerary monument deserves further investigation.

53. The 1501 history of the church of San Giobbe (n. 27, this chapter) refers to an altarpiece dedicated to St. Bernardin set up by Moro in the new capella maggiore (Cicogna, Inscrizioni, vol. 6, part 1, p. 724). The terracotta bust of St. Bernardin which bears Moro's coat of arms, now in the Sacristy of San Giobbe, was moved from the high altar in 1609 (Cicogna, op. cit., p. 707, notice of September 15, 1609, concerning the Confraternity of St. Bernardin which was responsible for the maintenance and decoration of the capella maggiore, dedicated to that saint).

54. Ghiotto, Pignatti, Opera Completa, no. 135, p. 101; Robertson, Bellini, pp. 90-91; canvas, 2,00 x 3,20, signed, dated, now in Murano, Church of S. Pietro Martire.

55. R. Goffen, "Icon and Vision," p. 511, n. 143. The painting was to be displayed "sopra l'altar grando di quel devotissimo et religioso monasterio le qual semo certo che in ogni tempo le habia a pregare Idio per l'anima nostra e de tutti li nostri che sono passati da questa vita."


58. Ibid., p. 513, n. 150.


60. Goffen, "Icon and Vision," p. 513, n. 952. She notes that the placement of Bellini's Pesaro and Dolfin altarpieces is "comparable to the many examples of sculpted burial monuments." Robertson, *Bellini*, p. 122; Bellini and assistants, wood, 90 x 1.45, signed, dated, the donor is repainted, still in the church.

61. See note 33 above.

62. See discussion of Trinity iconography Chapter Four, p. 66.

63. Schlegel, "Observations," pp. 19-33, identifies the architectural setting of Masaccio's Trinity as a representation of the double chapel of Golgotha in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem, in which chapel "one awaited the Last Judgement...Masses of the Dead for eminent persons were celebrated," (ibid., p. 26), the purpose being to commemorate the place of salvation as well as the donors (ibid., p. 28).

J. Freiberg, "The 'Tabernaculum Dei'," 1974, offers a different, cogent argument that the function of the architecture in containing a representation of a Eucharistic theme, the Trinity, is analogous to the function of the sacrament tabernacle in enshrining the Host. The Eucharistic connotations of the architecture are appropriate to a funerary context since the late Medieval cult of the Host was associated with the idea of personal salvation (Hatfield, Botticelli, 1977, p. 49, citing Gregory, Dix, *The Shape of Liturgy*, London, 1945, pp. 598 ff.; see further below p. 88, n. 86).

64. J. Coolidge, "Further Observations on Masaccio's Trinity," 48 (1966): 382-384, suggests that "the painting must have been originally one component in a three-part complex consisting of a fresco, an incised floor slab and an altar," which was consistent with the Florentine tomb monument tradition (p. 381).

C. Dempsey, "Masaccio's Trinity: Altarpiece or Tomb?" AB 54 (1972): 279-281, states that "the imagery of Masaccio's fresco is uniquely suited to the tomb of a lay donor," and that it is in effect a painted tomb monument following in the tradition of tomb monuments combining real sculpted and architectural elements with mosaic and fresco. However, he rejects the possibility of an associate altar.

E. Panofsky, *Tomb Sculpture*, 1964 , New York, p. 66, says that the representation of the donor as a corpse is rare in Italy and that
Masaccio's skeleton must be seen as a personification of death rather than a portrait. This would make it difficult to associate the Trinity with the tradition of double effigy tombs as Dempsey, op. cit., p. 280, does.


67. R. Hatfield, loc. cit.


69. S. Bettini, La Pittura di icone cretese-veneziana ei madonneri, Florence (1931), p. 20, n. 2, for origin of this type, and Goffen, "Icon and Vision." p. 492, n. 29. The "indicating" hand of the Hodegetria has a Passion significance in Italo-Byzantine iconography as can be seen in Andrea Rico's Madonna della Passione in the Galleria, Parma, discussed by Bettini, loc. cit., Fig. 55, where the Christ Child grasps Mary's thumb while looking at the instruments of the Passion, a gesture which appears in a Renaissance adaptation, reversed, in Cima's Madonna at the Uffizi, Florence, Fig. 56 (Coletti, Cima, 1960, no. 88). I am grateful to Dr. D. Pincus for this observation.

70. Ibid., p. 501 discusses Bellini's representation of the Christ Child as sacrifice.


72. The upraised left hand of the Virgin enthroned appears to be unprecedented in the immediate iconographical tradition. The lack of the usual direct confrontation of the Virgin with a supplicant makes the identification of this action as blessing uncertain since the Virgin, in her doctrinally defined role as the support or shrine of Christ, a vehicle of salvation rather than its source, is never depicted in an isolated gesture of blessing as Christ often is. As observed in Chapter Two, the San Giobbe altarpiece is remarkable in that neither the Christ Child nor the Virgin blesses directly nor looks at the main suppliant, Job. This is underscored by the adaptations by Bellini followers of the Virgin and Christ to more explicit blessing situations, for example, the votive painting of St. Mark presenting Doge Loredan to the Virgin in which Vincenzo Catena turns the Christ Child toward the blessing as if to intercede and reinforce, Fig. 60 (G. Robertson, Vincenzo Catena, Edinburgh, 1954, cat. 7). That the San Giobbe Virgin's gesture may have intercessory meaning is suggested by its similarity to a Byzantine type of interceding Virgin the Hagiosoritissa of which there is an example at Dumbarton Oaks, Fig. 61 (M. E. Fraser, "Church Doors and the Gates of Paradise, Bronze Byzantine Doors in Italy," Dumbarton Oaks
Papers 27 (1973):48, n. 7) and its Italo-Byzantine counterpart, the Madonna Avvocata. The question of the Virgin's right and left hand gestures requires further study.

73. W. Wolters, La scultura veneziana gotica (1300-1460), 2 vol., Venice, 1976, cat. 21, p. 157; Aquileia, Basilica, right transept, has been dated c. 1400, Wolters dates to c. 1330.


79. J. Taylor, On the Reverence Due to the Altar, c. 1637-1640, ed. Rev. V. Staley, Oxford, 1899, quotes the early Christian author Chrysostom: "Let us honor the altar indeed because it receives the Body of the Lord."


81. Hatfield makes this point in his discussion of the Eucharistic meaning of Botticelli's Uffizi Adoration, op. cit.

82. F. Hartt, "Carpaccio's Meditation on the Passion," AB 22 (1940):33, and fig. 9.

83. S. J. Delaney, "The Iconography of Giovanni Bellini's Sacred Allegory," AB 59 (1977):334, n. 25. Scenes of sacrifice may appear on the base of the throne. P. Verdier, "L'allegoria della Misericordia e della Giustizia di Giambellino," Atti dell'Istituto veneto di scienze, lettere ed arti, 1953, pp. 97-116, identifies the throne as the Sede Solomonis of the mother of the incarnate Christ, the Theotokos. Robertson, Bellini, pp. 99-102 suggests the subject of this much discussed and enigmatic work is a Meditation on the Incarnation that could be pendant to Carpaccio's Meditation on the Passion, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art (Hartt, op. cit.).

84. Delaney, op. cit., p. 332. She identifies charity as the central theme of the Sacred Allegory.

85. Catholic Encyclopedia, New York, 1907-1912 ed., s.v. "Paten": "The eucharistic vessel known as the paten is a small shallow plate or disc of precious metal upon which the element of bread is offered to God at
the Offertory of the Mass and upon which the consecrated Host is again placed after the Fraction." The formula for the consecration of the vessel speaks of the vessel as blessed as "the new sepulchre of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ."

The motif appears to have been introduced by Mantegna, possibly from the antique patena, in his San Zeno altarpiece (Fig. 26). A full understanding of the motif in Bellini's painting would depend on analysis of Mantegna's use of it, yet to be done.

86. In the Middle Ages the Host came to be considered the living God, was treated like a relic and was housed in reliquaries and shrines. The monstrance which displayed the Host on the altar at certain times derived from the saint reliquary. Hirn, Sacred Shrine, 1957, p. 148: "Just as the eucharistic God was often spoken of by Roman Catholic authors as a king, so the monstrance was compared to a throne...a "throne of grace." See Hatfield's condensed discussion of Host devotion in the fifteenth century, with good bibliography (op. cit., pp. 48-50). See also Colin Eisler's important remarks on the cult of the Host in fifteenth century Italy and the "extraordinary, probably unparalleled intensification of eucharistic concerns in Christian art," (C. Eisler, "The Golden Christ of Cortona and the Man of Sorrows in Italy," AB 51 (1969):236, pp. 235-240. Hatfield notes the extreme forms that adoration of the Host could take, especially at the moment of elevation during the consecration in the Mass (op. cit., p. 45). St. Francis was a devout worshipper of the Host (Hirn, op. cit., p. 113).


88. Fraser, "Church Doors," 1973, pp. 145-162. The bronze church doors on which the foliate cross appears bear iconography of intercession for personal salvation of the donor who may be represented by inscription or in effigy. The foliate cross represents the cross of crucifixion, the instrument of salvation. It and the associated imagery of these doors is derived from decoration of entrances to the sanctuaries of Byzantine churches. The foliate cross is found on chancel barriers of Early Christian and Byzantine churches, in Constantinople and in Ravenna. The central nave portal of San Marco was commissioned by Leo da Molino, procurator, in 1112, from a Venetian artist inspired by the Byzantine south door, c. 1080. Da Molino is presented by St. Mark to Christ. Bibliography for foliate cross given p. 148, n. 10.

89. Eisler cites the text of the institution of the rite of Eucharist, 1 Corinthians 11:26 as the basis of "The combination of the elevation of the Host with the Last Judgement..." (op. cit., p. 246).

90. Hirn, Sacred Shrine, 1957, passim.; Keydel, "Altarpieces," p. 158; Goofen, "Icon and Vision," p. 500: "Hence the spatial aspects of Bellini's architecture also have the effect of transforming the picture space into a shrine."
91. Ibid., p. 505 quotes St. Lorenzo Giustiniani, the first Patriarch of Venice, who has the Virgin say of herself: "Et quello che mi ha creato, s'è riposato nel mio tabernacolo." Hirn, Sacred Shrine, 1957, p. 164.

92. See Chapter Four, p. 66, n. 25.


94. Venturi, North Italian Painting, (1931), 1974, part II, pl. 27.


96. Ibid., p. 277, fig. 44. Mary is frequently referred to as portal, the window of heaven (Hirn, Sacred Shrine, 1912 ed., p. 343 ff.; inscription of Frari triptych, see note 61 above). Christ is the door to salvation (John 10:9, 14:6). See also Wilk, "Tullio Lombardo," 1977, p. 106.


100. See p. 87, n. 78 this chapter. A possible Byzantine intercessory Virgin underlying Bellini's Virgin is mentioned in n. 75.

101. See n. 99, this chapter.

102. The appearance of Job in an altarpiece such as this in such a pre-eminent position is unusual, perhaps unique in Venetian painting to this time. It is possible that the altarpiece commission represents a desire to reinstate the honor of Job in the church after Moro's personal promotion of St. Bernardin. The 1501 history of the church cited in n. 27, this chapter, may be a record of this. See n. 8, 100 this chapter.


104. Goffen, "Nostra Conversatio," p. 216. St. Francis' display of his wounds emphasizes the efficacy of his intercession which is due to his perfect emulation of Christ. The figure of St. Francis in some instances indicating his wound in a manner similar to that of Bellini's St. Francis, appears in a funerary context pointing to the tomb of the donor in the frescoes in the Lower Church of San Francesco in Assisi which Goffen identifies as the earliest examples of the sacra
conversazione. See for example Pietro Lorenzetti's Madonna and Child with Saints Francis and John the Baptist in the north transept of the Lower Church, Fig. 19, and Simone Martini's Five Franciscan Saints also in the north transept. See also the St. Francis blessing a donor with his wounded right hand in Bellini's Dolphin sacra conversazione at S. Francesco della Vigna, Fig. 54.
CHAPTER SIX

THE DUAL HERITAGE OF ROME AND BYZANTIUM

IN THE RELIGIOUS ICONOGRAPHY

OF THE VENETIAN STATE

Roger Fry, quoted in Chapter One above, noted the Venetian use of religion to symbolize ideas of state. John Ruskin also recognized the national significance which a religious image could have in Venice in the following observation of Bellini's San Giobbe altarpiece:

"The throned Madonnas of Vivarini and Bellini were to Venice what the statue of Athena in the Brazen House was to Athens... symbols, by help of which they conceived the presence within of a real Goddess."  

The sacred nature and framework of state is a Western Medieval tradition which had an exceptionally long survival in Venice. In fact, as S. Sinding-Larsen has demonstrated, it survived at least into the height of the Venetian Renaissance as the idealistic and rhetorical basis for the series of religious and historical paintings in the Ducal Palace commissioned to replace the losses of the 1574-1577 fires. Paolo Prodi observes that Venice...remained...apart from the process which had transformed church-state relations...through the Gregorian reforms of the eleventh century and the Investiture contest.

Robert Benson has cited the symbolic investiture of the doge by St. Mark as a survival of the Carolingian "dualist" concept of church and state power which views the secular hierarchy and clerical hierarchy as perfectly equal and parallel, and in which the secular ruler receives authority directly from God, independently from the Pope, just as the Venetian doge was claimed...
to do. The concept of dual church and state power which was the basis of the relation of the Venetian state to the church and which underlay a characteristic symbiosis of sacred and political institutions is related to the historic origins of the Venetian Republic in the early Middle Ages.

As an emerging state in the ninth century the Venetian Republic had to establish its ecclesiastical and political legitimacy and assert its freedom and power. The development of a national cult around the Evangelist Mark and his legendary connection with the north Adriatic was an important part of this process and provided a religious justification and expression of the aspirations of the state. The transferral of the relics of St. Mark from Alexandria to Rialto in 829-830 and their enshrinement in a chapel adjacent to the Ducal Palace was a means of claiming ecclesiastical authority and ultimately divine sanction for the state. The three important legends of St. Mark's special relationship to Venice, the Translatio (the translation of St. Mark's relics), the Apparitio (the miraculous rediscovery of the lost relics in 1094) and the Predestinazione (Christ's prophecy of the glorious destiny together of St. Mark and Venice) were recounted in later Venetian chronicles as historic fact. The predestinazione in particular was invented in the thirteenth century to demonstrate the divine right of Venice to the possession of the relics and the preordained site of the sepulchral church and thus the preordainment of Venice itself. Venice claimed the special protection of St. Mark much as Rome claimed the patronage of St. Peter, apostolic continuity with the early Church, divine sanction and an extended antiquity. The mystical union of the Venetian Republic with St. Mark in a shared glory, predestined by God, is symbolized by the state Church of San Marco.
Da quando il corpo del Santo, per dono divino e volonta umana veniva deposto all'ombra del sorgente stato, la lunga, difficile battaglia per l'indipendenza era vinta, e vinta in modo decisivo.10

With the defeat of Constantinople in 1204 Venice claimed to be not only the divinely proclaimed guardian of the Apostle Mark's relics, but also the successor of the Eastern Christian Empire of Byzantium.11 It thereby claimed divinely sanctioned authority, legitimacy and independence and special direct access of the Venetian people and government to God, represented by Christ and Mary. The sacred identity of the Venetian state and the symbiosis of state and church were sustained by the mystical, sacred and Byzantine nature of Venetian claims for both ecclesiastical and secular legitimacy and power. The interpenetration of the religious and the civic is seen in all aspects of Venetian devotion and culture, in liturgy, and in ceremonial processions celebrating great events of Venetian history.12 Political institutions had religious frameworks at all levels of society and the administration of ecclesiastical institutions was firmly retained by the government.13 Important dates in Venetian history, beginning with the date of foundation on Annunciation day,14 and military and diplomatic victories were made to coincide with the great religious days.15

Otto Demus has studied the Venetian use of religious imagery for political purposes in an analysis of the architecture and decoration of the state church of San Marco, which is reviewed most recently by E. Muir as the basis for his inquiry into images of power created by art and pageantry in Renaissance Venice.16 Demus shows how the Venetians forged documents of the origin of the Venetian patriarchate with St. Mark, fabricated legends concerning the relationship of St. Mark to Venice, and established the saint's sepulchral church as a state church with Apostolic tradition and
divine pre-ordination. The church of San Marco was in effect a monumental reliquary, founded on a sixth century Byzantine model, Constantine's Apostoleion.\textsuperscript{17} The use of art to articulate, document and propagate the self-image of the state and its claims manifests itself as the collection, restoration, copying and alteration of works of art of earlier periods and other cultures.\textsuperscript{18}

The awareness of Venetians of their state and government being somehow unique, perfect, durable and full of virtue was expressed in a set of beliefs about the Republic regarding its divine origin, sanction and destiny, its original liberty, inner concord and stability, and its historic mission of peace and justice. These beliefs are referred to loosely as the "Myth of Venice," which can be seen as an ongoing process of political self-definition and state propagandization in which the visual arts, architecture, sculpture and painting play a central role. The involvement of the arts with the traditions of the state accounts for what has often been seen as Venetian conservatism.\textsuperscript{19} It was a fundamental tendency of the Venetian tradition to draw on other cultures and eras to legitimize its claims to independence and power, and because of the political use of art in Venice "apparently quite uncorrelated currents could and did exist side by side."\textsuperscript{20} The retention of Medieval Byzantine style and motifs alongside newer Renaissance ideas in fifteenth century Venetian painting, for example Bellini's San Giobbe altarpiece, should not, therefore, be seen as retrograde. By 1500 the myth of Venice had experienced two major periods of elaboration corresponding to two major periods of growth and imperial ambition. The first period saw an emphasis on the Byzantine heritage of Venice in the thirteenth century, following the defeat of Constantinople
(1204, noted above) and the expansion of Venetian maritime power. Coincident with the military and economic expansion was an important period of constitutional definition and a growing political self-awareness among the aristocracy. In this first imperial age artisans imitated the style and iconography of early Christian and Byzantine relief, mosaic and illumination. The state church was surrounded by artifacts brought as spoil and symbolizing the transfer of authority from defeated states to Venice. The style of a "new Ravenna" evoked the last great age of Eastern and Western unity, the sixth century empire of Justinian.

In the second period of Venetian expansion on the Italian mainland after the wars with Genoa, ending 1379-1380, the emphasis shifted to ancient Rome.

The Roman Tradition in Fifteenth Century Venice

In the fifteenth century Venice as a newly emerging mainland power adopted what Chambers calls "neo-Roman" imagery, both to formulate and express ideas about the nature and perfection of its constitution and to cloak the imperial ambitions of the state in heroic ideals of civic duty and justice at home, and the defense of liberty and peace abroad. Although there was a proto-humanism in thirteenth century Venice (as Fritz Saxl has shown) it was not until centres of humanist learning and areas containing Roman remains were annexed by Venice that Venetians developed a broad interest in antiquity. In the fifteenth century ideas associated with imperial Rome, republican freedom, defense of liberty in a unified Italy, preservation of justice and peace, became important components of the myth of Venice, partly in response to the political polemics of the mid-fifteenth century when Venetian imperialistic incursions on the Italian mainland
provoked bitter criticism. However, the new Roman frame of reference also provided a renewed expression of fourteenth century (possibly older) ideas about the uniqueness, perfection and durability of the Venetian constitution which was thought to exemplify a balanced combination of the three forms of good government familiar to Medieval political thought. The Venetian constitution was compared in humanist writing with the great governments of antiquity, Athens and Rome, and declared to be equal or greater. Chambers observes that in art the evocation and imitation of antiquity and the commemoration of the splendours of "new Rome", Venice, was even more eloquent than in literature.

The influx of Renaissance artistic ideas to Venice is usually attributed to the visits of a series of Tuscan artists to Venice or its immediate region, Andrea del Castagno and Paolo Uccello in Venice, and Donatello in Padua, for example, in the 1440's and 1450's. A mature Renaissance style first appears in architecture in the 1460's, for example, Conducci's S. Michele in Isola, 1468-1469, and then in sculpture, with Rizzo and the Lombardi, all immigrants fusing outside ideas with Venetian tradition, and finally in painting with the work of Giovanni Bellini.

The Byzantine Tradition in Fifteenth Century Venice

The prominent Byzantine character of fifteenth century Venetian culture and daily life stemming from its strong and longstanding connections with the Byzantine Greek east, beginning with its origin as a Byzantine province, and sustained by commercial relations and periodic influxes of Greek immigrants, has been neglected. Wilk identifies the Byzantine tradition of Venice as an important source of iconography for Tullio Lombardo's sculpture. Her argument of a "Byzantine revival" dominating
late fifteenth century Venetian art tends to blur the fact that the Byzantine tradition was continuous in Venetian art, especially in painting, and that it co-exists and harmonizes with the newer Roman tradition which Chambers prefers to see as dominant.

The two traditions, the Roman and the Byzantine, were both facets of a single process of defining and propagandizing the state in the fifteenth century. The familiar opposition of these two traditions may be a modern distortion in perspective. Sergio Bettini observes the uninterrupted Byzantine tradition of Venice, reminding us that it is only now, at great historical distance, that we can distinguish between Rome and the Orient. The orientalism of Venice had its origin in a very strong attachment to the Roman Empire. In the early Middle Ages Constantinople was only a new Rome, a new centre of empire, and in fighting to succeed Constantinople Venice was claiming to be the heir of Rome:

La fedeltà romana e bizantina di Venezia, che si risolse esteriormente nel suo conservatorismo tenace, fu appunto un'arma, e non di poco valore, in questa lotta.

Furthermore, Bettini, in his discussion of the activity of the Greek icon workshops in fifteenth century Venice, notes the national associations which Byzantine miraculous and sacred icons might have in attesting to the antiquity of the state and of the individual families who owned them.

**Strengthened Political Expression in Late Fifteenth Century Venice**

In the late fifteenth century there was a strengthened propagandization of Venice, quasi-official and encouraged by the ruling aristocracy and by the doges. Whether due to serious military losses and threat to Venetian commerce and dominion, to increasing imperial ambitions, or to new political self-awareness, or all three factors, stimuli were present for a
new elaboration of the myth of Venice, drawing on the two major traditions. William Bouwsma notes the pressure in the late fifteenth century to articulate political beliefs. In these years the first beginning of an official historiography take place with the publication of Sabellico's history of Venice. Chambers observes that this period sees a height of "neo-Roman" pretension, particularly on the part of doges Marco and Agostino Barbarigo. At the same time, ancient claims to the sacred authority of the state, drawing upon the cult of St. Mark and the heritage of the Byzantine Empire, are also revived, possibly in response to political conflicts which characterized Venice's relations with the Roman Papacy in the fifteenth century.

The dual aspect of the myth of Venice in the fifteenth century as the heir to the empires of Constantinople in the east and Rome in the west is reflected in the arts by a unique integration of Byzantine Greek and antique Roman imagery and iconography. Robertson writes of the Arsenal gateway, 1460, that it

seems designed to assert the position of Venice as heir to the Roman heritage of the Byzantine Empire, perhaps with a conscious reference to the gates of Constantinople.

Those artists who are considered most important to the maturation of Venetian Renaissance style show a marked interest in the Byzantine tradition which becomes more pronounced. For example, Coducci, the designer of a church praised by Paolo Dolphin as "a temple which not only evokes antiquity, but actually surpasses it," employs Byzantine church plans in later works, such as S. Giovanni Crisostomo. The Lombardi, who Pope-Hennessy describes as the intermediaries between Florentine ideas and Venetian painting, also showed marked Byzantine interests as demonstrated by Wilk. Not only was
Venice the centre of the most important school of Italo-Byzantine icon painting in the fifteenth century, there was no little interest in Byzantine iconographical types and techniques on the part of more progressive painters such as Giovanni Bellini.42

**Two Artistic Traditions in the San Giobbe Altarpiece**

These two traditions are integrated in the San Giobbe altarpiece. The altarpiece is a masterful, perfectly integrated synthesis of the local Byzantinizing tradition with antique imagery, and of Byzantine and Renaissance and spatial organization, which correspond with the efflorescence in the myth of Venice (Fig. 64).

The Roman references in the painting, the product of Tuscan influences, lie primarily in the vaulted Brunelleschian chapel constructed according to strict perspective projection with its triumphal arch, square pediment and Corinthian columns echoing Moro's chancel arch. This influence is seen also in the architectural decoration the dolphin capitals, whose source Hubala traces to the capitals in the courtyard of the Palazzo Pazzi, Florence43 and in the Virgin's throne which is reminiscent of an antique altar with its rosette and cornucopia decoration. The Renaissance aspect of the work is seen in the disposition of figures within a defined, unified space, in a consistent atmospheric illumination, and the depiction of volume and balanced weight. Individuality and character are depicted by means of appropriate age, physiognomy, dress and gesture. There is a general sense of balanced harmony, of rhythmic variety within a symmetrical and unified composition. The graceful harmony and sensual beauty are exemplified above all by the three angels.44
Giuseppe Fiocco sees this harmony differently:

An ancient classical harmony controls and organizes the whole into a solemn Byzantine iconographic interpretation. The same rhythm, so often mistaken for humanistic return to antiquity, is found in the magnificent Madonna degli Alberetti...43

The composition of the San Giobbe altarpiece may reflect a Byzantine spatial sensibility that distinguishes the divine by means of defined spatial areas which are given individual meaning according to their proximity to the deity: the subordinate zones within the unified pictorial space, and the illusionistic sanctuary space of the painting within the actual space of the church interior. The effect is of a baldachin or tabernacle within the church, the entrance defined by the real stone arch leading to a vestibule area illusionistically projecting toward the viewer with an architectural plan adapting that of the Byzantine sanctuary with Eucharistic side chapels and central sacred altar area. The mosaiced apse is Byzantine, with its polychromed revetment46 and the application of real gold in the most sacred zones of the painting: the mosaic, the coffered barrel vault and the cross.47 The cherubim, as observed above, are a direct imitation of a Byzantine motif and the Latin inscription they bear may have a Byzantine association since the western melody of "Ave plena gratia" has a Greek origin.48

Carlo Gamba notes the Byzantine hieraticism often seen in Bellini's figures who are represented in "calm and concentrated attitudes" "always breathing a great vitality."49 Goffen interprets Bellini's Byzantine interest as a spiritual rather than literal evocation of Byzantium which can be sensed, for example, in a mood of solemnity and austerity.50 In his San Giobbe altarpiece, frontality and hieraticism distinguish the representation of the divine beings, the Madonna and Christ Child, and the underlying Byzantine type of the Madonna has been noted above in Chapters Two
The San Giobbe altarpiece is a perfect integration of Byzantine hierarchical organization of spatial zones within a perspectively unified, Renaissance architectural space. If the preceding observations are correct, we see a combination of the antique triumphal arch with the modified plan of a Byzantine sanctuary. Within this is a combination of a Renaissance treatment of the human figure and expression of human psychology and individuality with Byzantine iconographical types and mood and of a deliberate use of the archaic pictorial technique of gold application with a completely illusionistic oil technique. The angels themselves, so evocative of the ephebi of antiquity, "reinstate an old Byzantine motif" in Renaissance form. In addition to this integration of two artistic traditions which are drawn upon in the process of political definition and state propagandization known as the myth of Venice, there are more specific references to state iconography in the altarpiece.

State Iconography in the San Giobbe Altarpiece

The strong evocation of the interior of the state church of San Marco created by the mosaiced apse with its polychrome revetment, gold mosaic and golden light slipping into shadow has been noticed in recent studies:

in the Venetian context, mosaic settings for holy figures evoke not only Byzantium in general, but S. Marco in particular. These painted reminiscences of the basilica were combined by Bellini with the special ambience of S. Marco - as Theodore Hetzer has written, with "the warm brown of the walls, the golden twilight of the apses and cupolas"...The aura of S. Marco transforms these...sacre conversazioni, endowing them with its multi-leveled implications, religious and political. The use of real gold recreates the actual effect of light striking a mosaiced vault, not clearly evident in a photograph, and in a manner similar to the
Byzantine mosaic technique described by Demus in which light is manipulated to play on the concave gold ground in such a way as to silhouette and emphasize important imagery, here the cherubim, canopy and its foliage. Furthermore, the Byzantine angel design appears to be taken from the central vault of the Baptistery of San Marco as noted above (Fig. 10). The reference to the interior of San Marco evokes the legends concerning the divine predestination of Venice as the site of the saint's relics, and the ecclesiastical and political authority of the state, vested symbolically in the doge, whose chapel San Marco was.

The prominent motif of the canopy alludes not only to royal presence and to the Eucharist (in which the King of Heaven is believed to be present) but it also recalls the ceremonial umbrella carried by the Doge in the trionfo, the official procession of the Venetian government which is represented by the Doge and the Signoria. The insignia borne in this procession were believed to document privilegi granted to Venice in 1177 on the occasion of her alleged mediation of a dispute between the Pope and the Holy Roman Emperor. The ducal umbrella is a concise symbol of the events which formed the subject of historical decorations in the Ducal Palace and refers to the political and ecclesiastical independence, and universally recognized power of the Venetian state which qualified it as a mediator in a dispute between world powers. For Venetians the events of 1177 were an historical demonstration of the Republic's eirenistic role in world peace. The ducal umbrella together with the vault allusions to San Marco are abbreviated representations of the dual centres of Venetian power.
The Virgin as an Emblem of Venice

Within this manifestly Venetian setting is the throne of the Virgin Mary (Fig. 64). It is now recognized that the Virgin Mary had a special position in Venetian ideology. There was an ancient tradition of devotion to the Virgin in Venice which seems to have been part of the Byzantine heritage. The Virgin Annunciate was claimed as a patron saint of Venice and the legend of the foundation of Venice on March 25, 421, associated the origin of the Republic and its reception of an historic mission with the Virgin's acceptance of the Incarnation of Christ. The idea of Venetian historic mission was associated with the Virgin in another way by the concurrence of the great national ceremony of the Sensa commemorating the state-glorifying events of 1177 (mentioned above) with the day of the Ascension of Mary. This association may help to explain the popularity of the Coronation of the Virgin, the event following her Ascension to heaven, as a theme in Venetian painting. In his discussion of the Coronation theme in the decoration of the government buildings, the Ducal Palace, Sinding-Larsen observes that the Virgin's patronage of Venice was related to the conception of the Venetian Republic as an institution.

Some Venetian iconography of the fifteenth century implies a close association of the Virgin Mary and her qualities with the personification of Venice, Venetia. The national cult of the Virgin offered an opportunity for the symbolization of ideas about the mythic origin, sacred nature, and peaceful mission of the Venetian state, and more particularly about the government as an institution of justice. Recent studies stress the justice iconography of the exterior of the Ducal Palace which expresses the idea of the Venetian heritage of Solomonic wisdom. A number of personifications
of Justice appear in early fifteenth century Venice (Figs. 65, 66, 67). The most explicit is the painting by Jacobello del Fiore, for the Magistrato del Proprio in the Ducal Palace (Venice, Accademia, 1421, Fig. 66), in which crowned Justice, enthroned on the lions of St. Mark, bearing a sword and scales, receives divine counsel conveyed by the archangels Michael and Gabriel. The identity of Justice as Venetia is made clear in a second version of it in a roundel on the Piazzetta facade of the Ducal Palace where it is labelled Venecia (Fig. 65). Bartolomeo Buon's figure of Justice occupies a prominent position above the Porta della Carta, and viewed in conjunction with the figure of the Annunciation Gabriel on the corner of the Palace near it, repeats the idea of the divinely inspired Justice represented by the Jacobello del Fiore allegory (Fig. 67).

The qualities shared by Venice and Justice, virginity, wisdom received from God, and the imagery of crown and throne, partake of familiar Marian imagery. Furthermore, the attributes of Divine Wisdom who is personified in the apocryphal Wisdom of Solomon and Ecclesiasticus and in the Book of Proverbs were eventually transferred to the Virgin Mary. In art the theme of Divine Wisdom is traditionally represented by the Virgin as Sedes Sapientiae. Not only does the Sedes Sapientiae refer to the Solomonic throne of justice, that is, the Virgin as the seat of the Logos Incarnate, Christ the new Solomon, but in Marian cult and especially Franciscan, Mary was believed to have received omniprescence at the moment of the Annunciation and was herself a receiver and dispenser of wisdom. The comparison of a divine being such as Mary with a function of secular government such as Justice was an outcome of the religious mode of political thought in the Middle Ages which Kantorowicz terms "political theology."
In fifteenth century Venetian art the identification of Mary with Venetia is implied by shared ideas and imagery rather than stated outright. However, an early sixteenth century drawing by a follower of Titian unequivocally unites the two representations: the Virgin Mary holding the Christ Child is enthroned between two important Venetian saints, Roch and Sebastian, on the Venetian lion throne of justice familiar from earlier personifications of Venetia (Fig. 68).\textsuperscript{73} D. Rosand observes that Bellini's enthroned Madonnas are the most explicit examples in Venetian painting of the Virgin as Sedes Sapientiae.\textsuperscript{74} Is it possible that a representation of the enthroned Virgin (Fig. 69) evoking the ancient sacred and Byzantine traditions of the state, situated in a setting recalling the ducal chapel of San Marco and the Ducal Palace, approached by a triumphal arch, may allude to the divine sanction and protection of the state and personify Justice of good government in Venice?

The Angels as an Emblem of the Venetian Constitution

The three angels seated at the steps of the Virgin's throne symbolize celestial harmony, sounding the music of the spheres on their instruments as we see in Paolo da Venezia's Coronation of the Virgin in the Accademia, Venice (Figs. 11, 12). The use of musical metaphor for the constitutions of political states was introduced by Plato in his Republic, IV, and is an established idea in Western political thought.\textsuperscript{75} In the fifteenth century the lute in particular was associated with Apollo, the perfect ruler of the cosmos, and is the symbol of the distributive component of justice.\textsuperscript{76} In Venice the analogy of the state with cosmic order and the hierarchy of the angels, and the consonance of its governmental system with musical harmonies are frequent in laudatory and idealistic writings about the Venetian state.\textsuperscript{77}
In particular, the concept of the Venetian constitution as a combination or symbiosis of the three forms of good government, rule of monarchy, rule of the optimates, and rule of the people, in a perfect counterbalance found expression in the metaphor of musical harmony. It is used by Francesco Sansovino in his description of Jacopo Sansovino's logetta in Piazza San Marco:

...this Republic by virtue of the constitution of its laws, its unity and its uncorrupted liberty, is unique in the world, ruled with justice and with wisdom...from the union of the magistracies combined with equable temperament there arises an unusual harmony, which perpetuates this admirable government...

The balanced, triangular group of three musician angels, depicted as three distinct physical and physiognomical types, and three instruments, the lute of the uppermost angel made prominent by the brilliant illumination, seems emphasized by its position near the perspective vanishing point at the viewer's level of vision and may form an emblem of the unique and beautiful harmony of the tri-partite governmental system that was so admired and envied by the politically turbulent states of mainland Italy. If this is so, we see within the religious theme and function of the San Giobbe altarpiece a representation of the perfect and enduring Venetian constitution which is a manifestation of divinely inspired Justice personified by a Madonna who combines the Byzantine Hodegetria and the Virgin Annunciate, majestically enthroned in a Byzantine and Roman sanctuary alluding to the ecclesiastical and political power of the state. St. Bernardin of Siena himself had predicted that the Venetian Republic would endure as long as Justice reigned in Venice.
Conclusion

The San Giobbe altarpiece is the first example of the type of sacra conversazione which was popular in Venice in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. It is a category of Venetian painting which for Venetians rivalled and perhaps equalled the importance of the official decorations at the Ducal Palace and the history cycles of the Scuole. This importance may be due to the successful integration of the two major ideological traditions in Venice to express both a devotional theme and ideas about the sacred and triumphal nature of the Venetian state. In synthesizing Renaissance principles and imagery carrying ideas of a "new Rome" with the Byzantine tradition and its associated ideas of the sacred and divine mission of the state Bellini's San Giobbe altarpiece is further evidence that, as in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, the visual arts in fifteenth century Venice played a central role in orchestrating the ecclesiastical and political self-awareness of the ruling members of the state.
NOTES


9. Fasoli, loc. cit., and she cites Roberto Cessi as the author of the expression "chiesa nazionale veneta."


14. Sinding-Larsen, *Christ in the Council Hall*, p. 143; at least from the fourteenth century, March 25, 421 AD was accepted as the date of the foundation of Venice. See also Wilk, "Tullio Lombardo," 1977, p. 112, n. 62.


19. Wilk, "Tullio Lombardo," 1977, Chapter Three and pp. 47-54, discusses the geographical, historical and political contexts of Venetian "eclecticism."


24. Ibid., p. 12.


32. Ibid., p. 11.

33. Ibid., p. 12.


38. Robertson, Bellini, p. 7.


41. Ibid., pp. 137-144.

42. Grabar, "Byzance et Venise," 1956, p. 55: "les Vierges des icones, les mosaiques de San Marco continuent ainsi a vivre...chez Bellini surtout."


44. Boschini, La Carta, 1660, p. 29.


47. Wilk, "Tullio Lombardo," 1977, p. 136: "...the type of vaulted mosaiced space was meant to be recognized as 'Byzantine'."

"...the western melody of 'Ave (Maria) plena gratia' has been shown to be connected directly with the Greek Pope Sergius of the seventh century and was originally sung to the Greek text 'chaire Keharitomene'."

It appears as a vault inscription over the Virgin in Costa's *sacra conversazione* in Bologna, Fig. 51.


51. Note that the Madonna's gold brocade is painted illusionistically.

52. Vasari refers to the angels as "putti", quoted in Appendix II, p. 185 and n. 15 (Vasari, *Le vite*, (1568) 1878-1885).


55. Otto Demus, *Byzantine Mosaic Decoration*, London, 1948, p. 35, describes the "inclusion of shining and radiating material...especially gold, which is so arranged...as to light the spatial icon...The centres of iconographic interest and those of formal composition, which in classical Byzantine art are identical, are stressed by the strongest light," and "reflexions on the golden surface from which the figures stand out in significant silhouette." (my emphasis).

Dorme, "Titian's Pietà," 1972, p. 406: "Bellini used the painted golden semi-dome to evoke both the golden dome of heaven and the richness of Venice's Byzantine heritage, most conspicuously displayed in the interior of San Marco."

56. For the political meaning of San Marco see Demus, *San Marco*, 1960, pp. 54, 59.

"...the political point of view had such great importance for the Venetians that any detail of the decoration of this state church could, and did, take on a political aspect..."

"As a monument not of popular piety, but of "old-style" political religiosiety it was shaped...by the conscious will of a ruling caste whose representatives wanted it to be the visible symbol and the programmatic embodiment of their ideas."

58. The umbrella is a "simbolo di potenza e di giurisdizione," (ibid., p. 272, n. 8, and see also p. 296). In her fig. 7, Urban reproduces a miniature from the Cronaca del Monastero delle Vergini, of the first half of the sixteenth century (MS I Museo Correr di Venezia) "La pace di Venezia," in which the depiction of three leaders with umbrellas under the great central portal of San Marco forms an iconographical compression of the culminating events of the 1177 pace. The umbrella is the state insignia particularly associated with the doge (Sinding-Larsen, Christ in the Council Hall, pp. 157-158, n. 1). Chambers, Imperial Age, 1970, fig. 45, reproduces a detail of a fifteenth century capital from the Cortile dei senatori, in the Ducal Palace, Venice, which shows the canopy associated with a medallion profile of Doge Agostino Barbarigo (1486-1501) who excelled in the "new style of princely pomposity," (p. 90).

59. Fasoli, "Nascita di un mito," 1958, p. 466, quotes the Historia ducum venetorum in which we find the immortality of Venice linked to the mission of bringing peace:

"O quam beati estis, quia tanta pax apud vos potuisti reformare: hoc quidem erit memoriale nominis nostri in eternum!"

It is this sense of Venice following Divine Providence which found expression in the Predestination legend.


The Annunciation and Incarnation are explicitly associated with the destiny of Venice by Bernardo Giustiniani in his History of the Origin of Venice, Venice, 1493:

"...He Who, on that day, in choosing the Virgin for the redemption of the whole human race, looked especially towards her humility, as she herself confessed, wished also that on that same day, in a most humble place and from most humble men, a start should be made towards the raising up of this present Empire, a beginning of so great a work."

(Translated by P.H. Labalme, Bernardo Giustiniani, A Venetian of the Quattrocento, Rome, 1969, p. 267; see her comment, p. 272).


63. This is the name which is found on the personification of Venice in a
roundel on the Piazetta facade of the Ducal Palace, Fig. 65, (Wolters, Scultura veneziana gotica, 1976, cat. 49); although Pope-Hennessy dated it c. 1420 with which Sinding-Larsen concurs, Wolters dates it to before 1355. It seems significant that Sansovino identified this figure as Justice. In addition to the Venecia inscription, the roundel bears the following:

FORTIS / TRONO / FURIAS / MARE / SUB / PEDE / PONO


66. See n. 62 this chapter.


72. Ernst Kantorowicz, The King's Two Bodies, A Study in Medieval Political Theology, Princeton, 1957, pp. 100-101. The role of Mary in Venetian state iconography is a field of study yet to be fully explored.


77. E. Rosand, "Myth," 1977, pp. 512-513, points out the importance of music in political thought in Venice. See also Sinding-Larsen, Christ in the
Council Hall, pp. 137 ff., p. 152.

78. The most familiar is Gasparo Contarini's characterization of the fixed and temperate constitution of the Venetian state, quoted in E. Rosand, "Myth," 1977, p. 512, n. 4, from La republica e i magistrati di Venegia, Venice, 1548, p. xxxiii and xxxiii.


80. Cicogna, Inscrizioni, vol. 6, part 1, p. 584.
Fig. 1. Jacopo de' Barbari, San Giobbe in Canareggio, 1500

Fig. 2. Interior of San Giobbe
Fig. 3. Altar of Job, Church of San Giobbe

Fig. 4. Sanudo altar, altar of Job, Foscari altar
Fig. 5. Coat of arms
Fig. 6. Giovanni Bellini, Virgin Enthroned with Saints

Fig. 7. Photomontage of Bellini's altarpiece in original frame
Fig. 8. Bellini, Virgin and Christ, detail of San Giobbe altarpiece
FIGURE 9

DIAGRAM PLAN
OF ALTAR AND
ALTARPIECE
Fig. 10. Cherub below Christ in Glory, Baptistery, San Marco
Fig. 11. Bellini, Angels, detail of San Giobbe altarpiece

Fig. 12. Paolo Veneziano, Coronation of the Virgin
Fig. 13. Pietro Lombardo, portal of San Giobbe

Fig. 14. P. Lombardo, Francis and Job
Fig. 15. Dominic, Sebastian, Louis
Fig. 16. Border of Bishop's Cope
Fig. 17. Frame of Bellini's lost altarpiece, SS Giovanni e Paolo, Venice
Fig. 18. Giorgione, Virgin Enthroned with Saints
Fig. 19. Pietro Lorenzetti, Virgin with Baptist and Francis, Assisi, S. Francesco
Fig. 20. Reconstruction of Masaccio's Pisa altarpiece of 1426

Fig. 21. Filippo Lippi, Virgin, Angels and Saints
Fig. 22. Fra Angelico, Virgin Enthroned with Saints
Fig. 23. Domenico Veneziano, Virgin Enthroned with Saints
Fig. 24. Antonio Vivarini, Giovanni d'Allemagna, Virgin Enthroned with Four Fathers of the Church
Fig. 25. Reconstruction of Donatello's high altar for the Santo, Padua

Fig. 26. Andrea Mantegna, Virgin Enthroned with Saints, Verona, San Zeno
Fig. 27. Piero della Francesca, Virgin with Angels, Saints and Donor

Fig. 28. Marcello Fogolino, Virgin Enthroned with Saints
Fig. 29. Antonello da Messina, fragment of Virgin Enthroned with Saints

Fig. 30. Reconstruction of Antonello's San Cassiano altarpiece
Fig. 31. Lorenzo Veneziano, Virgin and Child Enthroned
Fig. 32. Antonio Rosso, Virgin and Child Enthroned

Fig. 33. Photomontage of Bellini's lost altarpiece with original frame in SS. Giovanni e Paolo, Venice
Fig. 34. Giovanni Bellini, Virgin Enthroned with Saints, formerly SS. Giovanni e Paolo, Venice

Fig. 35. Bartolomeo Montagna, Virgin Enthroned with Saints
Fig. 36. Cima da Conegliano, Virgin Enthroned with Saints
Fig. 37. Photomontage of Bellini's San Giobbe altarpiece in original frame

Fig. 38. Masaccio, Trinity, Florence, S. Maria Novella, 1425
Fig. 39. Giovanni Bellini, Virgin with Four Saints, Frari, 1488
Fig. 40. Giovanni Bellini, Virgin Enthroned with Saints, San Zaccaria
Fig. 41. Desiderio da Settignano, Sacrament Tabernacle

Fig. 42. Romanino, Virgin Enthroned with Saints
Fig. 43. Alvise Vivarini, Virgin Enthroned with Saints
Fig. 44. Marco Marziale, Circumcision

Fig. 45. Vittore Carpaccio, Presentation of Christ in the Temple
Fig. 46. Boccaccio Boccaccino, Annunciation
Fig. 47. Cima da Conegliano, Virgin Enthroned with Saints

Fig. 48. Cima da Conegliano, Virgin Enthroned with Saints
Fig. 49. Marco Marziale, Virgin and Saints
Fig. 50. Cima da Conegliano, Virgin Enthroned with Saints and Donors

Fig. 51. Lorenzo Costa, Virgin Enthroned with Saints
Fig. 52. Giovanni Buonconsiglio, Virgin Enthroned with Saints
Fig. 53. Giovanni Bellini, Mark Presenting Agostino Barbaro to Virgin, 1488

Fig. 54. Giovanni Bellini, Donor Presented by Baptist to Virgin
Fig. 55. Andrea Rico, Virgin of the Passion

Fig. 56. Cima da Conegliano, Madonna
Fig. 57. Giovanni Bellini, Virgin and Christ, detail of San Giobbe altarpiece

Fig. 58. Annunciate, Aquileia, Basilica, mid 14th c.
Fig. 59. Leonardo da Vinci (?), Annunciation

Fig. 60. Vincenzo Catena, Mark Presenting Leonardo Loredan to the Virgin
Fig. 61. Hagiosoritissa, marble relief, 11th century
Fig. 62. Masaccio, Pisa altarpiece, central panel
Fig. 63. Detail of foliate crosses from bronze doors of central atrium of San Marco, Venice, c. 1112
Fig. 64. Giovanni Bellini, Virgin Enthroned with Saints
Fig. 65. "Venecia," roundel on Piazza facade of Ducal Palace, Venice
Fig. 66. Jacobello del Fiore, Allegory of Justice, 1421

Fig. 67. Bartolomeo Bon, Justice, on Porta della Carta, Ducal Palace, Venice, 1441
Fig. 68. Follower of Titian, Virgin with Sebastian and Roch

Fig. 69. Giovanni Bellini, Virgin and Christ, detail of San Giobbe altarpiece


"Sanudo's List of Notable Things in Venetian Churches and
the Date of the Vendramin Tomb." Yale Italian Studies 1 (1977):

Shearman, John. "Masaccio's Pisa Altar-piece: An alternative reconstruc-

Sinding- Larsen, Staale. Christ in the Council Hall, Studies in the
Religious Iconography of the Venetian Republic. Institutum Romanum
Norvegiae, Acta ad Archaeologiam et Artium Historiam Pertinentia,

Tramontin, S.; Niéro, G; Musolino, C; and Candiani, C. Culto dei Santi

Venezia e l'Europa: Atti del XVIII Congresso Internazionale di Storia

Wilde, Johannes. "Die Pala di San Cassiano von Antonello da Messina."

Wilk, Sarah. "Iconological Problems in the Sculpture of Tullio Lombardo."

Venice, 1976.
The succession of notices of the San Giobbe altarpiece from the late fifteenth century provide evidence of its authenticity and of the generally high esteem it received from critical opinion. It has always been seen as a masterpiece and a pivotal work not only in the development of Giovanni Bellini's oeuvre but in the development of Venetian painting. The prevailing evaluation of the San Giobbe altarpiece is stated by Terisio Pignatti:

...la pala di San Giobbe e uno dei raggiungimenti capitali del Bellini maturo, e segna il punto in cui il suo stile, dopo le esperienze pier francescane, sembra quasi voler rientrare nel grande alveo della tradizione più propriamente veneziana, quasi a costituire un prototipo che poi dovrà servire di esempio per molti decenni.¹

Marc Antonio Sabellico's notice appears in his guide to Venice, De Venetae urbis situ, Venice, 1493² (see Chapter One, p. 2, above) which I have translated as:

On one side of the church is seen Giovanni Bellini's remarkable painting which he exhibited among his first attempts in the technique for which he was known.³

The difficulty of exact translation lies in the phrase "prima artis suae rudimenta," which scholars in the past have most frequently interpreted as a reference to the early position of the San Giobbe altarpiece in
Bellini's career, and have thus either cited it in support of an impossibly early date, or have ignored it as unreliable. However, considering the correct translation of "ars" as "skill" or "technique," Robertson's recent argument that "artis suae" probably refers more precisely to the technique of oil painting, mastered by Bellini toward the mid-point of his career, is convincing.  

Sabellico was not a native Venetian. His history writing, modelled on the Roman historian Livy, and following the conventional form of rhetorical didactic praise of the Venetian state, was designed to buttress the myth of Venice's special status, liberty and civic prudence in order to maintain his official patronage. The notable sights which he selected for inclusion in a laudatory description of Venice would be those commonly held to contribute to the glory of the Venetian state. The uninformed and laudatory nature of Sabellico's historiography suggests that he could not have formed an original observation of either the altarpiece or its position in Bellini's career, and that he probably echoes the popular fame of the altarpiece in Venice. Indeed, it is possible that the monumental San Giobbe altarpiece, erected in what was at that time a prominent location (to which "in apertum" must refer), was one of the first works by Bellini to strike the public attention. In that case, Sabellico's "prima rudimenta" may indeed give the altarpiece an erroneously early position, reflecting a general ignorance in Venice of the artist's previous career. The prominence which the work had is underscored by the fact that there is only one other altarpiece mentioned by Sabellico, the closely related sacra conversazione painted in oil by Antonello da Messina in 1476 for the church of San Cassiano.
Marin Sanudo's notice of the San Giobbe altarpiece occurs in a list headed "Queste sono cosse notabile in diverse chiesie," one of 47 lists of information about Venice inserted between the second and third parts of *De origine, situ et magistratibus urbis venetae*, MCV, MSS. Cicogna 969 (known as Cronachetta; see Chapter One, p. 3, above). I have translated the notice:

At San Giobbe an altar by Giovanni Bellini which is among his beautiful, well made works.8

The manuscript includes a dedication to Doge Agostino Barbarigo dated August 1493 and this traditionally accepted date for the work is substantiated by Sheard. The notice indicates the fame of Bellini's paintings and the prominence of this altarpiece within the oeuvre.9 The general nature of Sanudo's description of Venice, rivalling Sabellico in its attempt to praise Venice in a manner flattering to the ruling class10 together with his immediate theme "praise of the city of Venice," govern his selection of sights which reflect glory in some way on the Venetian state, although his knowledge of Venice is much wider and his observation more original than Sabellico.11 Sanudo's interest in the commemorated deeds of individuals who have contributed to Venetian greatness, and the emphasis in his notice on the making of the altarpiece suggests his intention was to praise and record the personal achievement of the artist.

Notices of Antonello's equally renowned San Cassiano altarpiece also appear in both works, in Sabellico's as the only other altarpiece mentioned, and in Sanudo's as the altarpiece receiving most detailed evaluation. It is a striking fact that the only two altarpieces considered worthy of mention by Sabellico, and that two, or possibly three,
of the four altarpieces selected by Sanudo, are important examples of a new type of monumental sacra conversazione altarpiece developed by Antonello and, primarily, by Giovanni Bellini in Venice. These are indications that the fame of the San Giobbe altarpiece in Venice, for which the contemporary notices provide strong testimony, was attached not only to the personal achievement of the artist in mastering the oil technique on a monumental scale, but to the format and theme of a particular type of sacra conversazione altarpiece.

Francesco Sansovino, writing in 1581, seems to base his comment on Sabellisco when he refers to the San Giobbe altarpiece as the first picture done in oil which he showed in public:

...si vede una Nostra Donna con San Sebastiano dalla destra & San Iob dalla sinistra, fu dipinto da Gian Bellino, & fu la prima tavola fatta a olio, ch'egli mettesse fuori e si come allora fu stimata molto da i buoni maestri, così al presente per la sua molta eccellenza e tenuta in gran prezzo.

Sansovino's notice indicates the fame of the altarpiece among painters, "i buoni maestri," in his own time as well as at the time the altarpiece first appeared. His notice is also of interest in indicating the two figures of the painting which were admired and copied by painters, the nude figures of the aged Job and the youthful St. Sebastian.

The first critical account of the altarpiece that we possess is that of a Tuscan rather than a Venetian, Giorgio Vasari, writing before Sansovino, in 1550 and 1568. In his Vite he assigns Bellini to the second phase of his three-phase history of painting, as showing the characteristic correct but overworked drawing and perspective, lacking the vivacity and grace introduced to painting by Leonardo da Vinci. Within these
restrictions, however, he praises the drawing and colour of the San Giobbe altarpiece, notes its continuous fame and implies that it established Bellini's reputation as a master of the oil medium and led to his state appointment.

Nella chiesa di Sant'Iobbe dipinse il medesimo, all'altar di esso Santo, una tavola con molto disegno e bellissimo colorito: nella quale fece in mezzo, a sedere un poco alta, la Nostra Donna col putto in collo, e Sant'Iobbe e San Bastiano nudi: ed appresso, San Domenico, San Francesco, San Giovanni e Sant'Agostino; e da basso, tre putti che suonano con molta grazia: e questa pittura fu non solo lodata allora che fu vista di nuovo, ma è stata similmente sempre dopo, come cosa bellissima.  

Venetian writers of the seventeenth century praised Bellini's mastery of the oil technique and called him the first great master of Venetian painting in intentional opposition to Vasari's judgement. The Vicentine Carlo Ridolfi wrote in 1648, as if in reply to Vasari's criticism of Bellini's style as "secco e crudo e tagliente" that Bellini...ridusse la maniera usata per l'adietro, che teneva del secco, ad un più esquisito e soave stile, col quale unicamente imitò la Natura: arrecando alle Imagine de' Santi certa nobile purità e divotione, onde con ragione ottiene il titolo di celeberrimo tra gli scorsi Pittori...  

Ridolfi's notice is interesting because it is the first one I have found where the integration of the painted architecture with the frame is selected for praise:

...una tribuna sostenuta da naturalissimi pilastri così somiglianti a quelli dell'ornamento, che paiono scolpiti.  

Similar points of praise are reiterated in Boschini's rather exaggerated eulogy of Venetian painting where he explicitly sets out to exalt Bellini as the "spring-time" of universal painting. In his reply to Vasari, stated as such ("per responder al Vasari"), he chose the San
Giobbe altarpiece as the work exemplifying Bellini's mastery of Renaissance principles. He praised the perspective ("ha forma cose perfete, col fondamento dela Prospetiva...") and the integration of the painted and real architecture, the authentic portrayal of the divinities ("certo quelo È'l retrato divin del Redentor"), the appropriate expression of the saints, the gay effect of the angels, and in general, the invention, colour, and drawing.20

In the Notizie of the Florentine Filippo Baldinucci, 1681-1728, we find the basic elements of what had become a standardized critical account of Bellini. His summary evaluation of Bellini's style echoes Ridolfi's, that Bellini with his new and beautiful manner of colouring increasingly left behind "il secco e duro modo degli altri..."21 He repeats the popular belief, given an anecdotal account by Ridolfi in 1648, that Bellini learned the technique of oil painting from Antonello da Messina, who introduced it to Venice when he painted the San Cassiano altarpiece of 1476.22 The prominence of the sacra conversazione altarpiece in Baldinucci's selection of Bellini's outstanding works, next to the history paintings at the Palazzo Ducale, suggests this type of altarpiece was considered a high form of painting (the San Giobbe, Frari, San Zaccaria, San Francesco della Vigna and S. Giovanni Crisostomo altarpieces are noted). He notes Bellini's fame as a painter of sacred images "alle quali diede maravigliosa divozione," and repeats the by then familiar idea of Bellini as the father of Venetian painting who founded "in the soul of Titian the first ideas of perfect work."23 Thus, Baldinucci sums up a tradition which accorded Bellini an honored position in Venetian
painting, his excellence as a painter and his activity as a teacher.

In the eighteenth century more systematic attempts were made to trace the development of Venetian painting, adumbrated by earlier writers, to fit Bellini's career within this development and to find a logical stylistic progression within his oeuvre. A. M. Zanetti in Della Pittura Veneziana, 1771, affirmed the position of Bellini as the father of Venetian painting: "Principe della Pittura nostra nella prima età." He was followed by Luigi Lanzi in his history of Italian painting, 1795-1796, who wrote that in the Venetian school Bellini was the father of beauty, grace, and expression. However, Bellini's inventive genius and the development of his oeuvre were distorted by the shift of critical popularity to his pupil, Giorgione. In a new schema of the history of Venetian painting Giorgione was given credit for the new style of light, colour, and beautiful form. To account for its excellence in these qualities, Zanetti and Lanzi, ignoring the implication of an early dating in the contemporary notices, placed the San Giobbe altarpiece at the end of Bellini's career by dating it with the two flanking altarpieces by Carpaccio and Marco Basaiti, 1510.

...in ogni parte di essa tavola si trovano molte bellezze del nuovo stile Giorgionesco, ch'era allora nel maggio fiore, e mai più il Bellino non si accostò tanto a quello, quanto in quest'opera.

Even here, however, the San Giobbe altarpiece receives its traditional evaluation as a key or transitional work in the development of Venetian painting.

The earliest notices by Sabellico, Vasari, and Sansovino were reconsidered in the general renewed interest in archival material and
documents of the early nineteenth century. In antedating the altarpiece to an earlier point in the artist's career scholars were able to reinstate Bellini's reputation for inventive genius. F. Aglietti, in an address read at the Accademia, Venice, in 1812, significantly entitled "Elogio storico di Jacopo e Giovan Bellini," stressed the importance of considering the early notices and their implication of an early dating for the altarpiece. He praised the San Giobbe altar as a "canon" for Venetian art. He was followed by G. A. Moschini who expressed the opinion that truth is to be found in the testament of those closer to the altarpiece in time, that Bellini was a greater master than had been believed, and that he opened the path of painting to his two greatest disciples, that is, Giorgione and Titian.

Ma siccome convien dare maggior fede a'contemporanei, che non a'posteriori storici, i quali più volte vogliono che alle lor conghietture ceda il fatto stesso; così vorrà dirsi, che il Bellini fu più gran maestro che non si crede, e ch'egli medesimo aperse la nuova via pittorica a'due sommi suoi discepoli.

The advances in scholarship were given a comprehensive summary by J. A. Crowe and G. B. Cavalcaselle in the History of Painting in North Italy, first published in 1871. Although their rigid aesthetics, based somewhat on Vasari and prejudiced against colourism, were not sympathetic to Bellini's art, they judged the San Giobbe altarpiece to be Bellini's "crowning trial" and "the culminating point in his career," showing a mastery of the oil technique in elevated and noble composition. They agreed with Aglietti's antedating of the altarpiece (see below) based on the early references to it as one of Bellini's first works in oil and on Vasari's location of it prior to the Sala del Maggior Consiglio.
commissions. They found Bellini's expression of devout feeling "by means essentially his own" a particularly Venetian counterpart to the "ecstatic style of Angelico" in Florence.\footnote{31}

The recognition of Bellini's responsiveness to new ideas, and his innovative ability was a basic premise of the reconstruction of his oeuvre which was begun in the later nineteenth century by Bernard Berenson and Morelli, who wrote that Bellini was finally being seen in his own right rather than always in relation to his illustrious followers. The tremendous development which took place over his long career was recognized:

In tutta la storia dell'arte non vi ha forse altri, da Raffaello in fuori, che al par di lui a sia dato passi più progressivi, dal cominciare di sua carriera fino alla fine.\footnote{32}

The main requirement was to establish a stylistic framework spanning Bellini's long career and some interpretive criteria on which to base attributions. For this reason criticism has remained primarily stylistic and formal rather than iconographical since some problems have resisted solution to this day. One criterion is Bellini's technical development from the linearity and hatched modelling of the tempera technique to the mastery of modelled form and atmosphere in the oil technique. The scheme which Fry outlined in \textit{Giovanni Bellini}, 1900, is based on this development from one medium to the other, and the San Giobbe altarpiece is seen as a key transitional work in this development:

In the S. Giobbe altarpiece, which we may assign to about 1486 or 1487, a new idea begins to be felt--the conception of enveloping forms in atmosphere by means of a subtle variation of the quality of the limiting contours of the figures.\footnote{33}

Another aspect has been the identification and dating of the influence of various painters upon Bellini's developing style, beginning with his father.
Jacopo, his brother-in-law Mantegna, and then Piero della Francesca and Antonello da Messina, and the sculptor Pietro Lombardo. Roberto Longhi's article establishing the importance of Piero della Francesca to Venetian painting was published in 1914, and Piero's influence on Bellini's oil technique, whether direct or indirect, was assessed by Bellini scholars. The San Giobbe altarpiece is generally assumed to display the influence of Piero's volumetric form and fused modelling, inherited through Antonello da Messina's San Cassiano altarpiece painted in Venice in 1476, to which Bellini makes his unique contribution of enveloping atmosphere. However, the unconvincing datings produced by both Fry and Coletti reveal the danger of imposing a rigid stylistic framework on Bellini's oeuvre. The third defining criterion has been the critic's intuition of a distinctly Bellinesque spirit of creativity which is characteristically and profoundly devotional. This was best expressed in relation to the problems of attribution and oeuvre by Pallucchini. In anticipation of definitive results from the major Bellini exhibition held in the Palazzo Ducale, Venice in 1949, Pallucchini wrote in the catalogue of the exhibition that some generations of students had been required to reach an oeuvre which presented Bellini's career as a continuous and unbroken formal development and which kept intact...

...l'intimità del suo sentimento, il potenziale della sua così profonda spiritualità. This exhibition was the occasion for a comprehensive appraisal of the Bellini oeuvre as it had been reconstructed to that point. An important result of the exhibition was a re-affirmation of Bellini's independent creativity, with the debate concerning the introduction of oil painting...
to Venice by Antonello da Messina or Bellini assuming lessened importance.

In the last forty years of scholarship there has been a consensus regarding the position and significance of the San Giobbe altarpiece in Bellini's oeuvre as a pivotal work which marks his maturity in the oil technique, exemplifies his original contribution to Venetian painting, and is a convenient "landmark" for the beginning of a new style of Venetian painting in the sixteenth century. Bellini's contribution has so far been evaluated as a stylistic and technical one. His unique character has been interpreted as a religious profundity. Other important aspects, such as Bellini's reception of new iconographical ideas, possibly through his patrons, and his invention of new compositional motifs, as well as his selective use of established iconographical traditions have been neglected. 38

There have been a number of important discussions of the San Giobbe altarpiece in the last decade. In his monograph on Bellini, 1968, Giles Robertson gives a methodical and useful review of the textual sources and stylistic evidence in an attempt to settle the problem of dating more satisfactorily. This study, however, is marred by its neglect of iconographical problems. The basic thesis is a conservative somewhat simplistic theory of style in which Bellini's achievement is to synthesize a dialectic of Tuscan space construction and Flemish light and atmosphere. Robertson's view of Bellini as a "unifier" 40 prevents him from recognizing any uniquely Venetian contribution the artist may have made. 41 He comments briefly on the religious iconography of the San Giobbe altarpiece suggesting that the presentation of the Virgin as the Annunciata rather than
the Mother of God indicates a "celebration of the incarnation" as the theme.42

In her doctoral dissertation on the physical settings of Bellini's altarpieces, Julia Keydel offers a groundwork for an iconographical interpretation of the altarpiece. She analyses the illusionistic architectural space created by the altarpiece in its church setting and the relation of the architectural elements and of the total chapel effect to architectural elements in other parts of the church interior. In doing so she strongly suggests that the effects of the illusionistic architectural space of the altarpiece are intended to, on the one hand, distinguish the supernatural presence of the Madonna and Christ Child and, on the other, to allow the worshipper a sense of real accessibility to the holy figures. Furthermore, she makes the important suggestion that the sacra
classical

conversazione theme of Madonna and saints may be intended to represent the possibility of reception to heaven of the person commissioning the altarpiece.43

**Dating**

As a signed work of certain attribution, well noted in the literature, the San Giobbe altarpiece has always been a key work in the reconstruction of Bellini's oeuvre. The two generally accepted termini are 1476, the year in which Antonello completed his San Cassiano sacra

conversazione,44 and 1493, the date of the two contemporary notices by Sabellico and Sanudo, discussed above, and of the consecration of the church of San Giobbe (Appendix II). The dates assigned by modern scholars
have ranged even beyond these limits, from 1470 to 1500. Because the style of the painting combines a linear treatment of contour, detail, and some of the modelling, associated with the earlier stages of Bellini's career, with a broad, harmonious colourism, and mature, monumental spatial construction, associated with his later career, the altarpiece lends itself to various positions in the oeuvre according to the individual critic's interpretation of the influences on Bellini and the phases of his technical and stylistic development. However, the position of the altarpiece as an expression of Bellini's mature, independent style at a mid-point in his career, foreshadowing his future achievements receives general consensus.

The San Giobbe altarpiece is preceded by the Contarini Madonna, Venice, Accademia which can be dated in the late 1470's or early 1480's. The Contarini Christ Child in his physical type, age, and facial features, and his mood of hieratic solemnity, is markedly similar to that of the San Giobbe altarpiece. The San Giobbe altar is probably contemporary to, or shortly later than, the Frick St. Francis, New York, and the Transfiguration, Naples, Museo Nazionale, both usually placed in the early 1480's, and whose linearity of technique is similar to that of the San Giobbe sacra conversazione. Paoletti saw a close relationship between the San Giobbe Madonna and Child with the Madonna of the Trees, Venice, Accademia. The San Giobbe altarpiece is generally considered to precede the triptych at the Frari, and the Barbarigo votive at S. Pietro Martire, Murano, both dated 1488. It is precisely for these years, from 1479 to 1488, and after, that we have notices of Bellini's work on the decorations of the Maggior Consiglio, Palazzo Ducale.
Zanetti's (1771) very late date of 1510 was satisfactorily dismissed in the first half of the nineteenth century by a reconsideration of Vasari's implication that the altarpiece lead to Bellini's official appointment (which took place in 1479). However this dating was pushed forward to the 1480's, partly on the basis of the new connoisseurship and stylistic analysis of Bellini's oeuvre by Fry (1900), Gronau (1903), and by Paoletti (1903, 1929). Although his source is unknown, Paoletti's reputation as a student of documents lent credence to his date of 1487\(^4\) which has become popular with Italian critics (Longhi, Brizio, Pallucchini, Bottari, and Pignatti). Giles Robertson in his recent study of problems in Bellini's oeuvre, proposes 1480-1485 on the basis of Sabellisco's possible reference to an early position in Bellini's career and of an hypothesized influence of the large scale Palazzo Ducale oil paintings on Bellini's oil technique and style in the San Giobbe altarpiece. A cogent argument for an earlier dating of 1475-1480, immediately following the SS. Giovanni e Paolo sacra conversazione, is offered in a recent study of Bellini problems by Huse in which the author interprets change in style as response to demands of commission and subject matter rather than to chronological development.\(^4\) This earlier dating would agree with Sabellisco's notice in the sense of being "among his first works," would coincide with the period of rebuilding at S. Giobbe following Moro's death, and might account for the similarity of the frames of the SS. Giovanni e Paolo and the San Giobbe altarpieces. However, the date departs too drastically from the conventional scheme of Bellini's stylistic development to be easily accepted.\(^4\) Likewise, Heinemann's (1962) late
date of 1490, based on what he sees as a stylistic advance from the Frari and Barbarigo altarpieces of 1488, is difficult. Until more conclusive documentary evidence comes to light, the first half of the 1480's, and possibly 1485-1487, would appear as the most likely period for the commission and execution of the San Giobbe altarpiece.
APPENDIX ONE

NOTES


3. My translation. Robertson, loc. cit., translates:

   In part of the church is seen the famous picture by Giovanni Bellini which he exhibited among the rudiments of his art.

   See also the Italian translation of L. Fauno in F. Biondo, Le historie del Biondo, 2 vol., Venice, 1547-1550.

4. However, Robertson's interpretation of "prima rudimenta" as a reference to the oil paintings Bellini was executing at the Palazzo Ducale depends on a reconstruction of the oeuvre which is still conjectural.


6. This is also implied in Vasari's notice, discussed below.


8. For the dating see Sheard, op. cit., p. 240; for the dedication, p. 245, n. 8. Sheard also discusses the nature and function of the lists and their relationship to the second part of the Cronachetta, "Laus urbis venetae," op. cit., pp. 226, 240, 245, n. 9. The list is
reproduced photographically in her dissertation "The Tomb of Doge Andrea Vendramin in Venice by Tullio Lombardo," (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1971), see v. 1, p. 277, for the San Giobbe notice. Sheard, "Sanudo's List," 1977, pp. 232-233, discusses the notice and notes, p. 241, that in light of Sanudo's infrequent reference to works of art, the San Giobbe notice is exceptional praise. Of the 61 items in churches in list no. 13, only four are altarpieces.


10. As noted above, the manuscript was dedicated to Doge Agostino Barbarigo. Ibid., p. 247, no. 14, suggests rivalry and ambition as two motives behind Sanudo's work.

11. On the nature of Sanudo's historiography and a comparison with Sabellico see ibid., pp. 223, 224, 247, n. 14.

12. Sheard identifies the altarpiece mentioned in the item on the church of SS. Giovanni e Paolo as Bellini's lost sacra conversazione (Fig. 34) which was probably roughly contemporary to Antonello's 1476 sacra conversazione (Ibid., p. 233).


15. Ibid., vol. 3, p. 155 and n. 3.


18. Ibid., p. 66.

19. Quoted in Chapter One, n. 7.


22. Ibid., p. 489.

23. Ibid., p. 488.


31. Ibid., p. 163.


38. F. Gibbons, review of *Giovanni Bellini*, by G. Robertson, in RQ 23 1970, pp. 175-175: "Giovanni Bellini, for example, is among the half dozen most inventive and historically significant painters of the Quattrocento..."


42. Robertson, *Bellini*, p. 87.

44. The altarpiece was removed from its site by the seventeenth century and is known in a reconstruction by Johannes Wilde based on two fragments in Vienna and reproductions of two other segments of the work (Fig. 30). The architectural setting, the grouping of the standing saints around an elevated throne, the oil technique, and volumetric modelling anticipate similar features in the San Giobbe altarpiece. Antonello's figure of St. Dominic and the Madonna's red brocade dress, in particular, are closely followed by Bellini (Wilde, "Pala di San Cassiano," 1929, pp. 52-72).


46. Robertson, Bellini, p. 92 and pl. LXXIII, signed and dated 1487.

47. Ibid., p. 68, and Robertson, Bellini, 1968, p. 84.


APPENDIX II

A DOCUMENTED HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

State of documentation of the
Church of San Giobbe

The archives of the Church of San Giobbe are now housed in the State Archives of Venice. In his introduction to these papers da Mosto does not indicate what these comprise. Cicogna, *Inscrizioni*, vol. 6, part 1, p. 532, lists his documentary sources as "Indice de' Testamenti conformato nel 1778," "Bilancio o sia Incontro de' legati della Sagrestia di S. Giobbe," various "Processi" numbered progressively, among which was an extract dated 1708 of the history and summary of writings and books of the Scuola di San Bernardino, which was associated with the church of San Giobbe. Cicogna lists all the inscriptions found in the church and environs the greater part of which he observed personally. The testaments of benefactors of the church and convent, and papal decrees and Venetian Senate decrees pertaining to San Giobbe are of major importance. Paoletti notes the loss of the documents for contracts and expenses of works commissioned by the church's greatest benefactor, Doge Cristoforo Moro. These papers had been in the possession of the Scuola di San Bernardino:

"Giacomo Ronco fu nostro Guard. Questo ha occultato il nostro Giornal del Libro Maestro Vecchio perch e non si possa viver la sua aminst. ne di anni 52..." 11 October 1529.
Frequently cited works:


2. Cicogna, *Inscrizioni*, vol. 6, part 1, pp. 530-531.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>EVENT</th>
<th>SOURCE AND CITATION</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. 1380</td>
<td>Construction of hospital buildings.</td>
<td>...ONDATOR M.CCC.LXXX IO CT PAVPERV S. IOB Cicogna, vol. 6, part 1, #106, p. 700.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. 1380</td>
<td>Construction of hospital buildings.</td>
<td>IOANN. CONTARENO FONDATOR DONVS ET HOSPITALIS S. IOB MCCCLXXX IOANNIS MARCELLO PRIORIS TEMPORE RESTAURATVM M.D.XXXVIII Inscription over an arch of the Calle dell'Ospizio on the Fondamenta S. Giobbe, before the bridge of San Giobbe. Cicogna, vol. 6, part 1, #105, p. 400.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. 1390</td>
<td>Giovanni Contarini founds an oratory dedicated to San Giobbe, and associated with the hospital.</td>
<td>&quot;Contiguo alla casa di carità fu per ordine del Fondatore fabbricato un Oratorio sotto l'invocazione del Profeta San Giobbe...ed il Pontefice Bonifazio IX...permise che in esso si potessero celebrar la Messa...concedendo spirituali indulgenze...dall' Apostolico Diploma segnato in Roma nel giorno XXII di Settembre dell'anno 1390.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DATE</td>
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<td>SOURCE AND CITATION</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. 1407</td>
<td>Giovanni Contarini bequeaths his estate to the hospital and oratory of San Giobbe to be administered by a commission of appointed citizens.</td>
<td>&quot;Item voglio et ordino et aggiungo che tutto quello che di sopra lasso al detto luogo di San Giob sia condizionato per modo che... debbasi perpetamente conservar, crescere, e moltiplicare per il medesimo luogo et ospedal.&quot;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Last will and testament of Giovanni Contarini dated 30 August.</td>
<td>Last will and testament of Giovanni Contarini dated 30 August.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Processo XLIII dell'Archivio di San Giobbe.</td>
<td>Processo XLIII dell'Archivio di San Giobbe.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. 1407</td>
<td>Death of Giovanni Contarini.</td>
<td>HIC IACET OI SANTITATE 9SPICVS NOBIL'7 VENERABIL' PSBIT DNS IOHANES 9TARINO 9DAN DM LVCE FONDATOR HVIVS ECLE' 7 LOCI SCI IOB Q OBIIT AN M CCCCVII DIE VIII MESIS SEPT AIA EIVS REQVIESCAT I FACE AM.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Epigraph incised in Gothic letters on borders of Giovanni Contarini's tomb slab dated 8 September 1407, originally located in the oratory founded by him, and in 1750 moved to the Chiesa della Pia Opera Contarini.</td>
<td>Epigraph incised in Gothic letters on borders of Giovanni Contarini's tomb slab dated 8 September 1407, originally located in the oratory founded by him, and in 1750 moved to the Chiesa della Pia Opera Contarini.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1417</td>
<td>End of Schism, Pope Martin V.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. 1428</td>
<td>Lucia Dolfin, the daughter of Giovanni Contarini, entrusts the hospital and oratory of San Giobbe to a family of Franciscan Observants.</td>
<td>&quot;...concesse a Lucia Delfina facolta di consegnar la Cappella di San Giobbe a Marco Querini, ed agli altri Religiosi Minori dell'Osservanza...&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Papal permission, 14 May.</td>
<td>Papal permission, 14 May.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DATE</td>
<td>EVENT</td>
<td>SOURCE AND CITATION</td>
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<tr>
<td>1431</td>
<td>Pope Eugene IV.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1434</td>
<td>Lucia Dolfin cedes her legal jurisdiction to the Franciscans.</td>
<td>&quot;Siccome poi Lucia s'era riservato il juspadronato, volle spogliarsi anche di questo a favore de'frati; e nel 2 gennjo 1434 cedettelo...&quot; \ Cornaro, Ecclesiae Venetae, vol. XII, p. 84 and 103 for document. \ Cited by Cicogna, vol. 6, part 1, p. 530 and p. 533, note 7.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1434</td>
<td>Venetians must study at University in Padua.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1441</td>
<td>Pope Eugenius IV prohibits the friars from destroying the old oratory prior to construction of the new church which presumably proceeds from this date.</td>
<td>&quot;...decisero nel giorno VII del susseguente Ottobre (1441) che l'Ora­torio illustre per la pieta del suo Fondatore, e per avere in esso cele­brata messa molti Cardinali...dovessse sussistere inviolabile, angi fosse obbligo de'Commissarj il refarcirlo e ristaurarlo.&quot; \ Cornaro, Notizie Storiche, p. 285.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1443</td>
<td>Sojourn of St. Bernardin of Siena in Venice where he may have lodged and preached at the new convent of San Giobbe.</td>
<td>&quot;riesce credibile...abitasse nel nuova convento di S. Giobbe, piccolo e povero, e di solitudine, e che in una assai grave malattia, che ebbe, fosse in questo luogo curato dal Medico... Pietor Tomasi.&quot; \ Cicogna, vol. 6, part 1, #109, p. 711, citing F. A. Luzzo, Vita di S. Bernardino da Siena, Venice, 1744.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1444</td>
<td>The death of St. Bernardine of Siena.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1447</td>
<td>The death of Lucia Dolfin and burial in the church of San Giobbe.</td>
<td>MCCCCXLVII. ADI X. OTVRIO.QVA IAXE LA VENERABEL DONA. MADONA LUCIA DOL...N DA S 10...E MADONA CECILIA REMBO... REQVIESCANT T PACE. \ On the ground in the cloister along the side of the church.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1450 The Canonization of St. Bernardin of Siena by Pope Nicholas V.

13. 1451 Elisabetta Bragadin, wife of Bartolomeo Bragadin, donates land to the church of San Giobbe.

14. 1451 Senator Cristoforo Moro undertakes the building at his own expense of the Capella Maggiore, dedicated to St. Bernardin, the two lateral chapels, and the enlargement of the monastery.

1453 The Fall of Constantinople. Council of Ten permit establishment of a Confraternity of St. Bernardin at San Giobbe by Moro.

1454 Senator Moro obtains spiritual indulgences from the Pope for the Chapel of St. Bernardino.

1457 Pasquale Malipiero elected Doge.

15. 1458 Bequest of Giovanni Dolfin, son of Lucia and Enrico Dolfin, to the hospital of San Giobbe.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1462</td>
<td>Cristoforo Moro elected Doge.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1463</td>
<td>Cristoforo Moro desires to honor the church of San Giobbe with the body of St. Luke the Evangelist brought from Bosnia, although its authenticity is never decided.</td>
<td>&quot;...col bucintore fosse tolto il detto corpo santo dalla galera...Andovvi il doge colla signoria, e smontati a San Gerema con processione del cler e de'frati fu portato a San Giobbe...&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>1464</td>
<td>Moro's departure to Ancona against the Turks, and death of Pope Pius II.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1470</td>
<td>Completion of Moro's tomb and probably of chapel.</td>
<td>CHRISTOPHORVS MAVRVS PRINCEPS MCCCLXX MENSIS SEPTEMBIS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1471</td>
<td>Doge Moro specifies his wishes for burial in San Giobbe and makes a considerable bequest to the convent.</td>
<td>&quot;Item lasso e vojo chel mio corpo sia posto in la glexia de ms. S. B. e S. Jopo in larcha mo factoare davanti laltar del dito S.B....vestido di labito suo sora dito e schalzo...&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1471 (continued)

"Item laso de li ducati Xm...per lavorar in la g. de ms. S.B. et S. Io et in tuto el monaster e per lo viver e vestir e bexogni de tutti li frari...dispensato in lavorar creser et ordenar la dita giexia..."

"...trato sia compito lopera comenzada de la giexia de S.B. in longarla e far le capele secondo el bixogno e per quelo, manchase al giostro dormitorio che se lavora tuto sia compito con ogni lavoro li hochorese far in hornamento de dita giexia e monestier."

"Item voio et ordeno che la giexia de ms. S. B.nardino cum le capelle siano cum quella solicitudine sara posibel compida et fornida secondo lordene dato...i lavori de le qual se debiano fornir per maistro antorio tajapiera de s. zacharia over per quelo de s. severo..."

The last will and testament of Doge Cristoforo Moro dated 1 September 1470 and 29 October 1471.

Cited by Cicogna, vol. 6, part 1, Document 5, pp. 728-732.

1471 It was prohibited that a doge could have his insignia or arms painted or sculpted with the ducal Corno anywhere outside the Palazzo Ducale (Cicogna, vol. 6, part 1, p. 580).

19. 1473 The Senate approves a gift of food provisions to the friars of the monastery of San Giobbe on the occasion of the Chapter, at which 200 friars were expected to attend.

"...sint pauperrimi quia vivunt de eleemosinis, solvi debeat per nostrum dominium datium duodecim anforarum vini (and other provisions)...sicut alias factum fuit ut hac piissima eleemosina ferventiores fiant in eorum orationibus."

Dated 5 April 1473, Cod. Grad.

Cited by Cicogna, vol. 6, part 1, Foglio A, p. 535.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
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<tr>
<td>1482</td>
<td>The Council of Ten exiles certain friars of the Church of San Giobbe who observe the excommunication of Venice by Sixtus IV and refuse to perform the divine offices.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>DATE</td>
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<td>SOURCE AND CITATION</td>
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<tr>
<td>24. 1493</td>
<td>Consecration of the church of San Giobbe.</td>
<td>Cited by Cicogna, vol. 6, part 1, p. 531, and by Pope-Hennessy, p. 351. CONSECRATIO HVIVS ECCLESIAE CELEBRATVR DIE XIII MENSIS APRILIS. Inscription on the wall between the second and third chapels on the left of the Church. There was apparently a second inscription under the clock recorded in Processo L dell'Archivio di San Giobbe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1587</td>
<td>Reconsecration of church of San Giobbe.</td>
<td>14 April. Cicogna, vol. 6, part 1, #1, p. 539.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. 1728</td>
<td>Burial of Constantino Bellotto at the foot of the altar of Job.</td>
<td>Cited by Cicogna, vol. 6, part 1, #14, p. 562. &quot;...SEPVULCRVM HOC VIR NOB. CONSTANTINVS BELLOTTO PROVIDE PARAVIT ANNO MDCCXXVIII Inscription at the foot of the steps of the altar of Job which is second on the right when entering the church of San Giobbe.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>